



2049.0.55.001 - Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing, 2012

Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 05/09/2012 First Issue

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges and thanks the wide range of stakeholders who showed strong commitment and expertise in providing guidance to the ABS as it developed both its statistical definition of homelessness and its methodology to produce the first official ABS estimates of homelessness from the Census. The contributions through formal submissions, comments at meetings and participation in expert groups provided invaluable information to help ABS understand the complexity of homelessness and guide how we can both collect relevant data (in Censuses and surveys) and analyse and report transparently on homelessness in Australia.

The ABS established the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) to advise the ABS on the development, collection, compilation, production and dissemination of robust statistics for use in analysing, understanding and reporting on homelessness in Australia. The ABS thanks all HSRG members past and present for their invaluable contributions, commitment and time in advising the ABS, representing their organisations and wider sector stakeholder views as well as communicating the aims and progress of the work towards both an ABS statistical definition of homelessness and an estimation methodology using Census data.

The ABS particularly thanks HSRG co-chair Shelley Mallett (Hanover General Manager of Research and Service Development, and Honorary Senior Lecturer at Melbourne University) for her expert knowledge in the field, strong facilitation skills, and dedication in representing the needs of members in finalising the development of both an ABS homelessness definition and the methods for estimating homelessness.

The ABS also acknowledges the contributions from homelessness services organisations and their staff, some of whom serve on HSRG, and many participated in public meetings to discuss the ABS statistical developments and gave their views in submissions. Many more provided their strong support for the enumeration of homeless people in the 2011 Census.

HSRG members include Professor Chris Chamberlain (Centre for Applied Social Research, School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University); Associate Professor David MacKenzie (Swinburne University); Sarah Kahn (Council to Homeless Persons); Travis Gilbert (Homelessness Australia); Zoe Probyn (North West Homelessness Network); Mark Bagshaw (South Australian Department for Communities and Social Inclusion); Geoff Neideck and Vicki Bennett (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare); representatives from Housing NSW (NSW Family and Community Services); Kathryn Mandla, Arati Waldegrave, Leon Donovan, Barbara Beatty and Edmond Hsu (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs); Dr Guy Johnson (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute); Maria Leebeek (Queensland Youth Housing Coalition); Dr Jill White and Anthea Bill (Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services); Eleri Morgan-Thomas (Mission Australia); Dr Jennie Gray and Helen Hemsley (Anglicare, WA); Kedy Kristal (Patricia Giles Centre); Lindy Edwards (Sera's Women's Shelter/WESNET); and Katherine Blackwell and Helen Innes (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations).

The ABS also benefitted from the views of the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness as well as other key stakeholders in homelessness policy and service delivery.

A special acknowledgement is extended to HSRG members Professor Chris Chamberlain and Associate Professor David MacKenzie for their ground breaking work in establishing a world first approach to the use of Census data in estimation of the homelessness population.

INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact Bob McColl on Canberra (02) 6252 6233.

Homelessness Statistics - Q&A and Factsheets

HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

The ABS has developed a statistical definition of homelessness. Details of the definition can be found in Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0).

The ABS has also finalised the methodology for estimating homelessness using data from the Census of Population and Housing. Details of the methodology can be found in Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

Below are commonly asked questions relating to homelessness statistics and answers to these questions.

The ABS has also prepared Factsheets on key areas of interest relating to homeless:

- [Homelessness - in concept and in some measurement contexts](#)
- [Youth homelessness](#)
- [Transitional Housing](#)
- [Overcrowding](#)
- [Domestic and Family violence](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness](#)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT IS THE ABS' NEW DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS has never before had a definition of homelessness.

In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements may include: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- Adequacy of the dwelling;
- Security of tenure in the dwelling; and
- Control of, and access to space for social relations.

See **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) for more information on the ABS' definition of homelessness.

WHY DID THE ABS DEVELOP A DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS has never before had a definition of homelessness. However, ABS did recognise the importance of homelessness for Australian governments and society more generally, and in 2009 commenced development of modules for the collection of past periods of homelessness in its household surveys. This development, coupled with the potential to develop official estimates of homelessness using data from the Census of Population and Housing, required a conceptual definition of homelessness to underpin operationalisation of the measurement of homelessness on a broadly consistent basis across these emerging datasets. Not only do comparable quality statistics, over time and across data sources, require a clear conceptual framework and definition to underpin their operationalisation in multiple collections, but the conceptual clarity guides ongoing fine tuning of those datasets to better serve that measurement purpose.

The ABS definition of homelessness was developed in consultation with the ABS' Homelessness Statistics Reference Group. Future ABS surveys will adopt this definition.

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WHY DIDN'T THE ABS USE CHAMBERLAIN AND MACKENZIE'S 'CULTURAL' DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

Key international and national definitions of homelessness (including Chamberlain and MacKenzie's 'cultural' definition) must demonstrate that a rigorous, evidence informed, process had been undertaken to develop the conceptual framework /definition with core elements underpinning it. The purpose of the definition is to advise on the conceptual elements of a definition that could be operationalised across a range of datasets, and not just be a summary method of developing a view of homelessness from the data currently collected currently in the Census of Population and Housing. There has been no

empirical validation of the 'cultural definition' in terms of its assumptions about a minimum shared community standard. Moreover, views have evolved over the past 20 years or so, suggesting that this standard is historically contingent.

The new ABS definition of homelessness was tested against the categorisation of a large list of living situations and addresses much of the ambiguity in the operationalisation of Chamberlain and MacKenzie's 'cultural' definition.

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WHAT PROCESS DID THE ABS GO THROUGH TO DEVELOP THEIR DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS established the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) to advise the ABS on the development, collection, compilation, production and dissemination of robust statistics for use in analysing, understanding and reporting on homelessness in Australia. HSRG is made up of key stakeholders from state and federal governments, peak bodies, service providers and researchers. The ABS convened a HSRG sub-group to advise HSRG and ABS on the key elements of a conceptual framework that could underpin the ABS definition of homelessness for use in compiling official statistics in Australia. The work of the definition sub-group was framed by tight timelines linked to specified ABS release dates for ABS official estimates of homelessness from the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses of Population and Housing. Because of the tight timelines the work of the sub-group was divided into two phases. The first phase, covered in the Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0), does not address any specific cultural definition issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' understandings of homelessness. The second phase, relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness, commenced in August 2012.

The Definition subgroup first met in December 2011. To complete its first phase work it met on eight occasions, including three all day face to face meetings and five teleconferences between December 2011 and June 2012.

The subgroup developed its thinking about the key elements of the definition through both a top down and a bottom up approach including:

- consideration of national and international statistical definitions of homelessness (summarised in a separate paper on the ABS statistical definition of homelessness); and
- review and analysis of over 300 housing and personal circumstances in Australia to test whether homelessness, as understood by researchers, service practitioners and policy and program officers, could be mapped to a basic set of key elements.

At key points in this process subgroup members were invited to seek broader stakeholder feedback about the various living situations under review and the implications for key elements of a homelessness definition.

Following critical analysis of the definitions and living situations ABS articulated a range of possible elements to support a definition of homelessness. Members discussed the pros and cons of these elements, and refined the elements over time. While consensus was not reached in the sub-group, the ABS definition largely reflects a majority view of members of the sub-group.

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HOW WILL THE ABS USE THIS NEW DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS definition of homelessness will be used to produce statistics on homelessness from a range of ABS collections. This includes prevalence estimates of homelessness from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing, and from household surveys such as the General Social Survey, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Personal Safety Survey, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, and other surveys, as appropriate.

This definition can also be used by other organisations to collect and output their statistics in line with the ABS definition and ABS statistical outputs.

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HOW DOES THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS RELATE TO THE METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

Comparable quality statistics over time and across data sources, require a clear conceptual framework and definition that underpins operationalisation of that definition in multiple collections, including fine tuning those datasets for that purpose.

The methodology for use in the Census can only partially operationalise the definition because although the Census is designed for many purposes, it is limited in the nature of the questions it can ask that will reflect on homelessness. While the information derivable from the Census for homelessness measurement will improve over time, nevertheless some proxies will always need to be developed for some elements of the definition for some of the different homeless operational groups that can be output from the Census. Details on how each of the homeless groups relate to the definition can be found in Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

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WHY DID THE ABS DEVELOP ITS OWN OFFICIAL METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

In 2008 following wide-spread discussion in Australia about the meaning and measurement of social inclusion and exclusion, the ABS recognised the need to develop robust and transparent homelessness statistics across a range of ABS datasets.

This decision coincided with the release of the Federal Government White Paper on Homelessness (The Road Home), which highlighted homelessness as an important social issue in Australia and identified the need to "turn of the tap" , "break the cycle" and arrest chronic homelessness.

To this point the ABS did not provide official estimates of homelessness through the Census. Estimates were produced by academics, Professors Chamberlain and Mackenzie, who estimated the numbers of homeless people in Australia using the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Chamberlain, 1999; Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2003; Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2008). This estimation work was underpinned by the cultural definition of homelessness developed by Chamberlain and Mackenzie (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2008).

Following the decision to develop official ABS homelessness statistics, the ABS began developmental work in this area by first reviewing the methodology employed by Chamberlain and Mackenzie to estimate homelessness through the Census of Population and Housing. During this review the ABS identified the need to develop a robust, defensible and evidence informed definition of homelessness for statistical purposes. The ABS began this work by reviewing key national (SAAP and Cultural) and international (ETHOS and NZ statistics) definitions.

A key outcome of the review, and the homelessness sector consultation that followed, was the establishment of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG). The HSRG was established to provide advice to the ABS about the development of homelessness statistics. A definition sub-group of the HSRG was established to inform the work on the homelessness definition.

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WHAT PROCESS DID THE ABS GO THROUGH TO DEVELOP THEIR METHODOLOGY OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

ABS initiated a methodological review of Chamberlain and MacKenzie's Counting the Homeless (ABS cat. no. 2050.0) by engaging with a range of stakeholders, including researchers and the homelessness services sector, and with the advice of a Steering Committee comprising representatives from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and from three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) represented on the inter-jurisdictional Housing and Homelessness Information Management Group (reporting to the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee).

Following an initiating review workshop on 21 October 2009, with Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, and representatives from Homelessness Australia, as well as from Commonwealth, state/territory and local government organisations, the nature of the ABS's concerns with the Counting the Homeless 2006 methodology were outlined in Issues in estimating the number of homeless in Australia: A paper to inform a review of Counting the Homeless methodology. This paper was made available on the National Homelessness Information Clearinghouse website in October 2009, and submissions were sought. Submissions were received from government organisations, academics and eight homelessness services sector organisations. Workshops to progress the review, which involved Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, were held in May 2010 and October 2010.

ABS's initial findings from the methodological review were published on 31 March 2011 in the Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). That Discussion Paper announced a public submissions process and a series of advertised public forums in each capital city. The Discussion Paper noted the importance of the issue of homelessness for society and governments, and the need for quality data for decision making purposes, particularly for measuring change over time. In that context, the Discussion Paper described a methodology that had been previously used, and proposed a range of methodological changes that would be needed before consistent, transparent and repeatable official estimates could be made of the number of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to have been homeless on Census night.

To maximise exposure to the review findings, the advertised public forum details were also emailed directly to many stakeholders, and the forums were held in each capital city through April and May 2011. Over 150 people attended the public forums, and many more attended sector or jurisdictional specific discussions with the ABS. The ABS was also invited to participate in discussions about the review findings in a range of meetings. There were 35 written submissions in response to the Discussion paper.

Consultation on the review findings confirmed the Discussion Paper's emphasis on the significance of the areas of likely underestimation of homelessness in relation to youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people escaping domestic and/or family violence. However, no alternative estimation methods were proposed that could address the issues of underestimation for homelessness in these groups.

As a result of the consultation, the ABS released Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, Aug 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002) in August 2011 that outlined

- the key themes identified from the consultation and the submissions received;

- addressed some of the issues raised in the consultation;
- reiterated and further articulated the concerns expressed in the Discussion Paper about the underestimation of key groups of homeless people;
- noted the establishment of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group; and
- described future developments in homelessness estimation, including but not limited to a proposed quality study about homeless school students.

A key outcome of the review, and the homelessness sector consultation that followed, was the establishment of the

Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG). The HSRG was established to provide advice to the ABS about the development of homelessness statistics. A methodology sub-group of the HSRG was established to inform the ABS' work on the official estimates of homelessness from the Census.

The purpose of the sub-group was to advise the HSRG and the ABS on the methodology used for estimating the prevalence of homelessness using data from the Censuses of Population and Housing in 2001, 2006 and 2011, taking into consideration the limitations of the Census and the ABS definition of homelessness. The work of the definition sub-group was framed by tight timelines linked to specified ABS release dates for ABS official estimates of homelessness from the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses of Population and Housing.

The Methodology subgroup first met in April 2012. To complete its work it met on six occasions including one two day face to face meeting and five teleconferences between April 2012 and July 2012.

The subgroup developed its thinking about the methodology by reviewing and analysing each of the individual homeless operational groups including consideration of:

- the wording and intent of the Census questions;
- the field procedures of the Census;
- the limitations of the Census for **enumerating** some population groups;
- the limitations of the Census data for **estimating** some population groups;

At key points in this process subgroup members were invited to seek broader stakeholder feedback about the many living conditions that may constitute homelessness and their implications for key aspects of the methodology.

The ABS considered the input it received from members in refining the methodology for official estimates of homelessness from the Census, and undertook additional analysis to further consider the recommendations made by members. Balanced with member suggestions was how the methodology: needed to be aligned with the new ABS definition of homelessness; reflected the wording and intent of the Census questions and field procedures; and that the methodology was consistent and repeatable across Censuses.

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HOW DOES THE FINAL METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING OFFICIAL ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS COMPARE TO THE REVIEW METHODOLOGY?

The bulk of the Review methodology of estimates of homelessness from the Census has been carried forward into the official methodology.

The following changes were made to the Review methodology:

1. The removal of imputed estimates, as appropriate, throughout the methodology;
2. The removal from the homeless grouping 'Persons in temporary lodging' of people who were in those types of institutions on Census night that are specific exclusions from the official definition of homelessness (as there excluded from the 'cultural definition'); and
3. The addition of a new homeless operational group: 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings'.

In addition, the ABS presents, alongside the homeless estimates, three additional categories of marginal housing that can be identified as homeless:

- Persons living in other crowded dwellings;
- Persons in other improvised dwellings; and
- Persons marginally housed in caravan parks.

These categories of living arrangements provide some insight into those who may be at risk of homelessness.

The reasons for the changes to the methodology were:

1. There is no evidence that many of the people who were imputed in homeless situations were homeless. See Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001) for more details on both which imputed records were incorporated in the official homelessness estimates, and the reasons for the exclusion of others.
2. The new ABS definition of homelessness outlined specific exclusions from homelessness as people may have chosen to live in these circumstances and have accommodation alternatives; or they are required by law to live in these circumstances; or they are in acceptable temporary living arrangements (such as student halls of residence); or or they are living in temporary arrangements that are essential for their broader health and wellbeing. The specific exclusions include: people confined in prisons, detention centres and other institutions such as juvenile correctional facilities or hospitals; students living in halls of residence; and members of religious orders such as monks and nuns living in seminaries and nunneries and similar establishments. The category: 'Persons in temporary lodging' in the Review estimates included some people in these circumstances which have been removed in the final estimates.
3. Under a definition of homelessness that is centred around the concept of 'home' those people who are living in severely crowded dwellings meet the definition of homeless. International definitions, and key stakeholder feedback confirmed this dimension of homeless.

WHEN WILL THE 2006 AND 2001 ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS BE PUBLISHED?

The ABS will be publishing final official homeless estimates from the 2006 and 2001 Censuses on Tuesday 11 September 2012 in the publication: **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0). Estimates from the 2011 Census will be published in November under the same catalogue number.

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WHEN WILL THE 2011 ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS BE PUBLISHED?

The ABS will be publishing estimates from the 2011 Census on Monday 12 November 2012 in the publication: **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0). The methodology uses Census second release variables, which will be published on 30 October 2012.

The same ABS methodology will be used for the 2011 as the 2006 estimates, aside from any changes required due to the changes in estimation cut offs applied when considering income, mortgage and rent (see Key differences between methodology employed for estimating homelessness for different Census years - Income, mortgage and rent cut offs in Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001) for more details) and any changes that result from changes in the field procedures carried out in 2011. Any such changes will be outlined in the 2011 publication.

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WHAT OTHER DATA CAN I USE TO HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS will publish an **Information Paper: Guide to Homelessness Statistics** (cat. no. 4923.0) in November 2012 to assist users with analysing the multiple data sources available to obtain a more complete picture of homelessness. The guide will outline which parts of the homeless definition ABS collections can, or cannot capture.

In addition to prevalence estimates of homelessness from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing, the ABS has collected previous experiences of homelessness from the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS), published in September 2011. In March 2012, the ABS released an article titled Life after homelessness in the publication Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0) drawing on those GSS results. The article examines a range of socio-economic indicators of those who had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the 10 years prior to the survey, but were no longer homeless.

An improved homelessness module has also been included in the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The ABS expects to also include this module, further developed, in the 2014 General Social Survey. The ABS will consider developing a culturally appropriate module for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. The ABS will also be collecting experiences of homelessness for people who leave a violent partner through the Personal Safety Survey.

The ABS will also investigate using the 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been identified as likely to be homeless. The circumstances of people identified as likely to be homeless on the 2011 SLCD can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and into the future it should be possible to report on repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD. It will also be possible to compare these results, for those likely to be homeless, with the rest of the population.

There are also non-ABS sources of information about homelessness, such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Specialist Homeless Services collection, and the FaHCSIA funded Melbourne Institute Study: **Journeys Home: Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability**.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENUMERATION AND ESTIMATION AND HOW DO THESE EFFECT ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

In summary, the main limitations with using Census data to estimate homelessness can be summarised as:

- under / over **estimation** - people were enumerated in the Census but the data collected about them is not sufficient to be certain about whether or not they were homeless on Census night;
- under-**enumeration** - people who were not enumerated in the Census.

Observing homeless people in any data collection is a challenge, and their homeless circumstance may mean that these people are not captured at all in datasets used to count people generally. And not all homeless people will be enumerated in data sets of those homeless people accessing particular services for the homeless. The 2010 ABS General Social Survey 2010 found that of those who had had an experience of homelessness in the last ten years and who were no longer homeless at the time of interview, only 40% had sought assistance of formal services. While data on people who access services are very important data sources for understanding people who access services, they cannot provide an estimate of the total number of homeless people at one point in time. Only the Census offers the opportunity to estimate for most people who were likely to have been homeless at one point in time.

However, there is an inherent imprecision in estimating homelessness using the Census of Population and Housing because the Census is not designed to classify people according to whether or not they were homeless on Census night. Variables collected in the Census that were designed for other purposes must be interpreted as proxies for likely homelessness. The ABS methodology includes in its homelessness estimates groups of people who, on balance, were most likely to have been homeless on Census night.

While it may be tempting to overestimate homelessness in some groups to compensate for both under-enumeration and likely under-estimation for some other groups, such an approach would result in estimates of characteristics that did not reflect those of the homeless population, including but not limited to their geographic spread. This may result in the misdirection of policy, funds and services. And while a balance between unavoidable under-estimation and deliberate over-estimation may result, this is unlikely. It is also very likely to be very different with each Census, destroying the capacity to monitor change over time. Recognising which groups of homeless people are underestimated in the Census, and using supplementary data sources to understand these groups, will both better address the needs of homeless people, and allow for assessments of change over time in the level of homelessness.

ABS recognises that some groups of people are more likely to be under enumerated in the Census. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be both under enumerated and over-represented in the homeless population. ABS has developed strategies for each Census aimed at maximising the enumeration of Indigenous persons.

So called rough sleepers and people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are also at risk of being under enumerated in the Census. The ABS develops a homeless enumeration strategy for each Census, and works with homeless service providers to maximise the enumeration of these groups on Census night.

The ABS Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is used to estimate for the under enumeration of the Australian population in the Census. However it only covers people in private dwellings at the time of the PES, and therefore will not capture homeless people living in non-private dwellings but who were missed on Census night.

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IF THE CENSUS UNDER-ENUMERATES AND UNDER-ESTIMATES THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE, WHY DO THE ABS REMOVE ANY OVERESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS?

The ABS methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census ensures that over-estimation is minimised. Such over-estimation has the potential to obscure the true size of the homeless population, mask where homeless people are located, misrepresent the characteristics of those who are homeless, and prevent valid measurement of progress over time.

Overall, estimating homelessness from the Census is done by identifying those groups who, on balance, are most likely to be homeless based on a number of characteristics that identify different 'elements' of the definition of homelessness. These estimates cannot include those people who were never enumerated in the Census.

While it may be tempting to overestimate homelessness in some groups to compensate for both under-enumeration and likely under-estimation for some other groups, such an approach would result in estimates of characteristics that did not reflect those of the homeless population, including but not limited to their geographic spread. This may result in the misdirection of policy, funds and services. And while a balance between unavoidable under-estimation and deliberate over-estimation may result, this is unlikely. It is also very likely to be very different with each Census, destroying the capacity to monitor change over time. Recognising which groups of homeless people are underestimated in the Census, and using supplementary data sources to understand these groups, will both better address the needs of homeless people, and allow for assessments of change over time in the level of homelessness.

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WHICH GROUPS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE UNDERESTIMATED IN THE ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

The ABS has previously identified in its publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) that some key population groups will be underestimated in estimates of homelessness from the Census: homeless youth, homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people fleeing domestic and/or family violence.

To find out more information about these groups, see the following fact sheets:

- [Youth homelessness](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness](#)
- [Domestic and Family violence](#)

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THE ESTIMATE OF YOUTH IS LOWER THAN WAS FOUND IN CHAMBERLAIN AND MACKENZIE'S METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS. WHY IS THAT?

The ABS has previously identified in its publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) that youth homeless will be underestimated from the Census. Chamberlain and MacKenzie used their collection and a range of assumptions to estimate the number of homeless youth who would have been staying with friends and relatives on Census night. ABS has determined that the methodology used is not robust for use in official estimates of homelessness. See below for more information.

Youth (sometimes referred to as 12-18 years or 12-24 years) who are homeless and 'couch surfing', but for whom a usual residence is reported in the Census, are masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on

behalf of the young person assumes that the youth will return to their home and reports the youth's previous address. Homeless youth will be underestimated with the group: 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'. Analysis of Census data shows that estimates of the level of youth homelessness from the Census are likely to be low, but the scale of any hidden youth homelessness cannot be assessed with any currently available data.

Some commentators reflect on the numbers of homeless youth who contact services over time and use this to gauge the scale of youth homelessness. However, evidence from the former Supported Accommodation Assistance Program statistics shows that the number of youth who experience homelessness over a year is a high multiple of the number who are homeless at a point in time (the Census prevalence measure). There is likely to be an even higher number of approaches to services than the numbers assisted over time. So far, none of these service related data sources provides a fix on the prevalence of homelessness and ABS surveys still provide the best option for a retrospective view through understanding past homelessness.

ABS has not yet been able to implement any reliable way of estimating current homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers indicate that the low number of homeless youth staying with other households does not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness.

Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

For analysis on youth homelessness from the Census see the ABS publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). These papers include comparisons with the Chamberlain and MacKenzie methods.

In their analysis, Chamberlain and MacKenzie classified 6,378 youth aged 12 to 18 years old who were enumerated in the Census as homeless. However, a separate estimate of youth homelessness was derived by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (21,940 people) using sources other than the Census. The main source that was used was their National Census of Homeless School Students (NCHSS), adjusted using assumptions about the ratio of school to non-school homeless youth aged 12 to 18 years. In their estimate the difference between the Chamberlain and MacKenzie Census measure and their separate estimate is assumed to relate to those youth who may be homeless who were staying with another household on Census night but had a usual address reported for them. They conclude "...we think the missing 15,562 are hidden within this category". Pages 18 to 20 explains this methodology in more detail.

ABS has concluded that the Chamberlain and MacKenzie estimate of 21,940 homeless youth is not sufficiently robust to inform on the numbers of 12-18 year old youth who were experiencing homelessness on Census night. The Chamberlain and MacKenzie estimate is based on: school reports which capture youth homelessness over a week rather than on Census night; an undercount adjustment methodology that is inconsistent between Censuses; and it applies an extrapolation to the non-school youth population that is both inconsistent with the stated methodology and which overstates the estimate. See pages 46 to 48 in the ABS' Discussion Paper for more information.

In analysing the characteristics of 12-18 year olds who had a usual address reported and were visitors on Census night, no characteristics have yet been identified that differentiate between those who were homeless and those who were visiting for other reasons. Additional analysis on the characteristics of the possible relationship status of the 39,966 12-18 year old usual residents visiting on Census night was provided in the Discussion Paper to try to understand any characteristics that can be used to distinguish potential homeless groups. This analysis used age, sex and Census District of usual residence to attempt to understand possible family units travelling together.

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Factsheet: Homelessness - in concept and in some measurement contexts

FACTSHEET: Homelessness - in concept and in some measurement contexts

Definitions of homelessness are culturally and historically contingent. They range from limited objective measures which conflate homelessness with rooflessness to more equivocal subjective definitions founded on culturally and historically determined ideas of 'home'. The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements include: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

Over the last decade there has been increasing international attention on the need for a consistent definition of homelessness, particularly in Europe. Governments, researchers, statisticians, policy makers and service providers alike have recognised that the development of an agreed definition for statistical purposes that allows for consistent measurement of the scope and scale of homeless both within countries but also across countries. In Europe this has led to the

development of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) definition (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, 2011). Closer to Australia, the ETHOS definition informed the development of the Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness (Statistics New Zealand, 2009).

In Australia, while debate about definitions has occurred among academics, policy makers and service providers over the last decade or so, a loose consensus was achieved around the tri-partite cultural definition proposed by Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) that spans from rooflessness to insecure and inadequate housing. This definition has informed the estimation undertaken by Chamberlain and MacKenzie of homelessness using Census and other data sources.

In 2008, following widespread discussion in Australia about the meaning and measurement of social inclusion and exclusion, the ABS recognised the need to develop robust and transparent homelessness statistics across a range of ABS datasets. This decision coincided with the release of the Federal Government White Paper on Homelessness (**The Road Home**) (FaHCSIA, 2008a), which highlighted homelessness as an important social issue in Australia and identified the need to "turn off the tap", "break the cycle" and arrest chronic homelessness.

Up until 2008, ABS had neither developed its own definition of homelessness nor adopted any other definition, and it did not provide official estimates of homelessness. However, ABS did support research undertaken by academics Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie who estimated the numbers of homeless people in Australia using the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population and Housing (Chamberlain, 1999; Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2003, 2008). Their estimation work was underpinned by the cultural definition of homelessness developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008). The ABS would like to make special acknowledgement of Professor Chris Chamberlain and Associate Professor David MacKenzie for their ground breaking work in establishing a world first approach to the use of Census data in estimation of the homelessness population.

Following the decision to develop official ABS homelessness statistics, the ABS began developmental work in this area by first reviewing the methodology employed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie to estimate homelessness through the Census of Population and Housing. During this review (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, 2011a and 2011b) the ABS identified the need to develop a robust, defensible and evidence informed definition of homelessness for statistical purposes. The ABS began this work by reviewing key national (SAAP and Cultural) and international (ETHOS and NZ statistics) definitions.

A key outcome of the ABS review into the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census, including the homelessness sector consultation that followed, was the establishment of the ABS Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG). The HSRG was established to provide advice to the ABS about the development of homelessness statistics. A definition sub-group of the HSRG was established to inform the work on the homelessness definition and a methodology sub-group of the HSRG was established to inform on the work on the methodology used to estimate homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing.

This move to producing official ABS statistics on homelessness represents an important development for the ABS and reflects commitment to improve the measurement of housing and homelessness in Australia. The ABS is working to improve the measurement across a range of ABS data sets. To date, the ABS has published information about people who have had a previous experience of homelessness from its 2010 General Social Survey, and will collect similar information in its 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The ABS proposes to continue to collect this information in its 2014 General Social Survey in addition to other surveys, as appropriate.

Because of the complexity of homelessness from a social policy and service delivery perspective, there are a wide range of views on what constitutes homelessness. While the ABS has benefitted from expert advice, there are areas where it was not possible to obtain agreement among all experts. In these circumstances, the ABS has balanced the views of different experts and decided, from a **statistical perspective**, what the appropriate treatment of these circumstances should be. It acknowledges that there will continue to be differences of view, and in producing statistics on homelessness, the ABS will be intending to present the information in a way that alternative views of homelessness can be constructed to suit particular purposes.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

Factsheet: Youth homelessness

The ABS has previously identified in its publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002) that youth homeless will be underestimated from the Census.

For some youth (sometimes referred to as 12-18 years or 12-24 years) who are homeless and 'couch surfing', a usual residence may still be reported in the Census. Their homelessness is masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but are simply visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported for 'couch surfers' either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on behalf of the young person staying with them assumes that the youth will return to their home. Homeless youth will be underestimated within the group: 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'.

ABS has not yet been able to establish any reliable way, with existing data sources, of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and

researchers have indicated that the estimates of homeless youth derivable from Census data do not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness.

Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

For analysis on youth homelessness from the Census see the ABS publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

Factsheet: Transitional Housing

FACTSHEET: Transitional Housing

Long-term supported accommodation, often described as Transitional Housing Management (THM) Units, often provides some security of tenure, and the dwellings are adequate (including basic kitchen facilities and a bathroom) and the household has privacy and exclusive use of those basic facilities. The THMs that meet these levels of housing would, under the ABS statistical definition of homelessness, not be classified as homeless. However those THMs that lack one or more of these elements would be classified as homelessness accommodation.

Unfortunately, the lists of supported accommodation that the ABS obtained for the 2006 Census did not separately identify THMs from other crisis accommodation, nor report information about the elements of homelessness. Therefore all THMs are indistinguishably included in the broader estimate of 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' in the Census and will be included in the estimates of homelessness. For 2011, the ABS did receive information from some jurisdictions about THM but did not obtain any of the requested information about the facilities or the tenures offered. The ABS is analysing the list information received for 2011 to consider ways in which it can better separately identify THMs from and other supported accommodation in future Censuses.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001)

Factsheet: Overcrowding

FACTSHEET: Overcrowding

People living in crowded dwellings represent a continuum within the scope of those who are marginally housed. In the context of the elements developed for the ABS definition of homelessness, people living in severe overcrowding are considered to be homeless because they do not have control of, or access to space for social relations. In extremely overcrowded dwellings inhabitants are generally unable to pursue social relations, or have personal (i.e. family or small group) living space, or maintain privacy, nor do different family / groups within the dwelling have exclusive access to kitchen facilities and a bathroom. In such circumstances, if people had accommodation alternatives it would be expected that they would have exercised them.

There are many situations of overcrowding which do not threaten the health and safety of the occupants. For example, the overcrowding may be slight, or for a short period of time. However, severe and sustained overcrowding can put the health and safety of the occupants at risk.

People living in severe overcrowding are considered to be in the sixth ABS homeless group. Severe crowding conditions are operationalised in the Census as living in a dwelling which requires 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, as defined by the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

The concept of crowding is based upon a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex.

Operationalisation using Census data, for overcrowding as homelessness at this severe level of 4 or more bedrooms is designed to prevent the misclassification of people as homeless who may choose to live together under some crowding to save money, to be close to family or for other reasons. In addition, it also takes account of the limitation of the Census

household form which only seeks relationship information within the household in relation to 'person one', as well as child relationships to 'person 2'. This limitation of Census family coding results in misclassification of family relationships, particularly for large households with complex family relationships or households which contain multiple families, or where persons are temporarily absent. Households that look like crowded group households in the Census may actually include a number of couples. Under CNOS a single adult requires their own bedroom but a couple can share a bedroom, and the masking of relationships can inflate the crowding measure.

For persons living in other crowded dwellings, that is those usual residents living in dwellings reported in the Census where the dwelling requires 3 extra bedrooms to accommodate them according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS). Under the operationalisation of the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless but are considered to be in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness. The ABS will present estimates of marginal housing from the Census, including persons living in other crowded dwelling along side estimates of homelessness.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

Factsheet: Domestic and Family Violence

FACTSHEET: Domestic and Family violence

Domestic and family violence is a significant cause of homelessness and personal safety is a concern for people who are subject to, or fleeing domestic and family violence.

Under the ABS homelessness definition, a person displaced from their home due to domestic violence becomes homeless if they have a temporary living situation and do not have access to accommodation alternatives that are secure, safe and adequate (and the home in which they were subject to domestic violence is not considered a safe alternative accommodation to their homeless situation).

A person experiencing the violence who remains in their unsafe home with the perpetrator, could be considered to lack control of and access to social relations. However, assessing these situations in a measurement context is very difficult, and the ABS definition currently excludes such situations from its definition of homelessness and characterises their living situation as being precarious or unstable and being at risk of homelessness. ABS will report the available information on these living situations and continue to develop its statistical measurement in this area.

The ABS recognise the difficulties in both enumerating people who are displaced from their home due to domestic and/or family violence in the Census of Population and Housing, and in classifying all of those that are enumerated correctly as either homeless or not homeless on Census night. Those enumerated in supported accommodation for the homeless will be measured. Some who are in boarding houses, staying temporarily with other households, in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough, or staying in other lodgings such as hotels or motels on Census night and who report no usual address will be classified as homeless. However some will not be able to be distinguished from other people who were visitors on Census night.

Some people who are displaced due to domestic and family violence may not be enumerated in the Census. Out of fear they may not have themselves recorded on a Census form for the dwelling they are staying in. For those who are reported on a Census form as being away from home on Census night, they may be reluctant, for a number of reasons including stigma, to report having no usual address on Census night. Alternatively, they may have an expectation that they may be able to return to their home in the future and do not see themselves as not having a usual address. As a result they can not be distinguished from other people who were visiting on Census night and Census based estimates must be recognised as being an underestimate for this group.

The ABS have worked with its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group members to look to ways to both improve the enumeration of these homeless people in the Census as well as developing alternative sources of information such as the Personal Safety Survey. In late 2013 the ABS will have data from the Personal Safety Survey on people who left a violent current or previous partner and whether they 'couch surfed', sleep rough, stayed in a shelter etc. This will provide will provide an indication of what accommodation was used by people the last time they separated from their violent partner/s and will be an important new source of information about homelessness and domestic violence.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the enumeration of, and the identification as homeless of those who were fleeing domestic and/or family violence in the Census. However the ABS recognises the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

Factsheet: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness

FACTSHEET: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness

The ABS definition of homelessness has been developed for application to the general population in Australia. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the measures of homelessness developed with this definition, there are likely to be additional aspects to homelessness from an Indigenous perspective that the definition does not currently adequately capture. In recognition of the differences in understanding of the concepts of home and homelessness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, the ABS is undertaking further research about how the ABS statistical definition of homelessness may be understood in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context. The ABS will establish a sub group of the HSRG to provide recommendations to the HSRG for the development of a definition relevant to homelessness in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context. This has commenced and the results of this definitional work will be released in 2013. Any recommendations from this group will be considered by the ABS in both Census enumeration and subsequent estimation of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The ABS will also work to develop a culturally appropriate module on previous experiences of homelessness suitable for inclusion in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey which can be compared to estimates from the total population from the 2014 General Social Survey.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been under enumerated in the Census and estimates of homeless based on Census data will be an underestimation. In the 2006 Census, the underenumeration of Indigenous Australians was 11.5%. Some of those who were under-enumerated may have been homeless at the time of the Census.

Underestimation of homeless among those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were enumerated in the Census may occur as, for some Indigenous people, 'incorrect' information regarding 'usual residence' may have provided which masks their homelessness.

It is debated in the literature whether the concept of 'no usual address' is appropriate for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Morphy (2007) discusses the problems in defining a 'usual resident' and 'visitor' in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, as the distinction between 'my country / not my country' is more salient than the distinction between 'resident / visitor'. This issue becomes particularly problematic for people who are highly mobile. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) also discuss the relevance of 'no usual address' to the Indigenous population, as the 'usual address' question is approached with a different cultural frame of reference. They note that it is not culturally appropriate to record 'no usual address' on Census night because 'home' is understood in a different way, particularly when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are staying with their extended family. Due to the different cultural frame of reference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is widely assumed that the western concept of 'no usual address' is under-reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This issue will impact on Census based estimates of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons enumerated in the Census who are classified as being in the categories for 'improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out', or temporarily visiting friends or relatives while homeless.

While the increased effort in the 2011 Census to improve the enumeration of Indigenous Australians was successful, under enumeration is still large, and the difficulties in differentiating between those who may be homeless remain.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the identification of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Census but recognise the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

For analysis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census see the ABS publications: Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011 (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0) and Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

About this Release

This Information Paper presents the Australian Bureau of Statistics methodology for estimating the prevalence of homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing. This methodology was developed in consultation with the ABS' Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and builds on the review that the ABS conducted on the development of official estimates of homelessness. The ABS' statistical definition of homelessness underpins this methodology. More information on the definition can be found in Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 2922.0)

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INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is not just the result of too few houses - its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia (FaHCSIA, 2008a). Homelessness is not a choice.

For some people, homelessness is an isolated event - it happens once and for a short time. For others, a small minority, homelessness is part of a chaotic and uncertain life of poverty and disadvantage. These people tend to cycle in and out of homelessness and when they do find housing, it tends to be short term (FaHCSIA, 2008a).

People who are homeless are among the most marginalised people in Australia. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion (Department of Human Services Victoria, 2002). To have a socially inclusive Australia, all Australians need to have the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to learn, work, engage and have a say (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2012). Homelessness freezes people out of opportunities that most Australians enjoy (FaHCSIA, 2008b).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) General Social Survey 2010 identified that those people who had experienced homelessness at some time in the previous 10 years were much more likely to be socially excluded than those people who had never been homeless. Overall, people who had experienced homelessness were:

- more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment;
- more likely to have a disability or long-term health condition;
- more than four times as likely to report that they had a disability type or restriction which was psychological;
- nearly three times as likely to report having been a victim of violence in the previous 12 months;
- more likely to live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- nearly five times as likely to report multiple types of cash flow problems such as being unable to pay bills on time, and ten times as likely to have gone without meals because they could not afford them;
- much more likely to be unemployed; and
- twice as likely to be supported by government pensions or allowances

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a)

Homelessness may be the cause of, or the result of disadvantage and social exclusion. And disadvantage and social exclusion may persist even after a person is no longer homeless.

Effectively targeting policies and services, monitoring progress and understanding outcomes for those who are or have been homeless, requires transparent, consistent and reliable statistics. However, people who are homeless are among the hardest population to collect statistics from. The ABS has developed a program of social statistics on homelessness that includes, but is not limited to, the development of prevalence measures from the five yearly Census of Population and Housing and through longitudinal linkage to report on outcomes of and pathways into homelessness; reporting previous experiences of homelessness through household surveys such as the General Social Survey, and the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers; and experiences of homelessness for people who leave a violent partner through the Personal Safety Survey.

Comparable quality statistics, over time and across data sources, require a clear conceptual framework and definition to underpin the operationalisation of that definition in multiple collections, including fine tuning those datasets for that purpose.

The ABS **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) outlines the ABS' statistical definition of homelessness which will underpin all ABS statistics on homelessness.

This methodology Information Paper presents the ABS methodology for estimating the prevalence of homelessness using data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing, based on the ABS statistical definition. A summary of the definition is provided in Chapter 3 of this methodology publication.

Not all dimensions of the ABS definition of homelessness can be operationalised in all data collections. This publication therefore also reports on the limitations of using Census data to estimate the prevalence of homelessness for some populations such as youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and persons fleeing domestic or family violence.

Notwithstanding the limitations of any methodology that might be applied to estimate homelessness from the Census, the ABS methodology does provide estimates of people enumerated in the Census who were most likely to have been homeless on Census night that can be compared over time to track increases or decreases in homelessness. These estimates also report on the characteristics and living arrangements of those who were most likely to have been homeless on Census night.

The ABS will publish an **Information Paper: Guide to Homelessness Statistics** (cat. no. 4923.0) in November 2012 to assist users with analysing not just estimates compiled from the Census but also from other available data sources to obtain a more complete picture of homelessness. The guide will outline which parts of the homeless definition ABS collections can, or cannot capture.

The ABS methodology for producing official estimates of homelessness using Census data was developed in consultation with the ABS' Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) and builds on the ABS review of the methodology developed by Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie for their estimates of homelessness that used both Census and other data sources. The review findings, and the consultation process including discussion forums in all capital cities and submissions from a wide range of interested parties, are described in the ABS' publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006**, (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

The ABS will publish final official homeless estimates from the 2006 and 2001 Censuses on 12 September 2012 in the publication: **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0). Estimates from the 2011 Census will be published in November under the same catalogue number.

Because of both the complexity of homelessness and the degree of uncertainty when using Census data to estimate homelessness, there are a wide range of views on the best practical approximations of homelessness that can be compiled from Census data. While the ABS has benefited from expert advice, there are areas where it was not possible to obtain

agreement among all experts. In these circumstances, the ABS has balanced the views of different experts and decided, from a **statistical perspective**, what the most appropriate methodology needs to be to deliver both transparency and consistency for measuring change over time. The ABS acknowledges that there will continue to be differences of views on methodology, and in producing official statistics on homelessness from the Census, so the data are presented in detail to allow users to see the components that have been included in the estimates. The ABS intends to present the information in such a way that alternative methodologies may be applied.

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Estimating Homelessness From the Census of Population and Housing

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ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

The Census aims to count all persons in Australia on Census night (with the exception of foreign diplomats and their families). To maximise the quality of count of the Australian population, the ABS has a special strategy to enumerate some homeless populations that are hard to enumerate through the standard Census procedures. The Census is the only collection that goes to all persons in Australia, and is therefore the best source to get an estimate of the number of homeless people at any one point in time. However, 'homelessness' itself is not a characteristic that is directly measured in the Census. Instead, estimates of the homeless population may be derived from the Census using analytical techniques, based on both the characteristics observed in the Census and assumptions about the way people may respond to Census questions.

With advice from the ABS Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG), the ABS has recently developed and published its statistical definition of homelessness. The methodology described in this paper articulates how the definition is operationalised using Census data to provide a point in time estimate or 'prevalence estimate' of homelessness. The statistical definition is the basis for making some of the judgements about the interpretation of people's responses to the Census questions to determine whether they were likely to be homeless on Census night.

In brief, under the ABS statistical definition of homelessness, when a person does not have accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The definition is described in more detail in the following Chapter.

There is no single variable in the Census which can accurately inform on homelessness. Data item categories such as 'improvised home, tents, sleepers out' and 'no usual address' will include both people who were likely to have been homeless on Census Night and people who were unlikely to have been homeless. For example, people travelling away from home for considerable periods and having no place in which they are likely to stay for six months or more in the year of the Census should correctly report 'no usual address'. People living in a shed as they build their new home will be enumerated as living in 'improvised home, tents, sleepers'. Such variables need to be considered along with other data collected in the Census in determining whether or not a person was likely to have been homeless on Census Night.

Commencing in late 2009 the ABS undertook a review of the methodology used by Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie to compile their estimates of the homeless population, as published in the ABS Australian Census Analytic Program as **Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0). The work by Chamberlain and MacKenzie was ground breaking, and attempted to operationalise their 'Cultural definition of homelessness' using the Census of Population and Housing. This work has been important in informing the ABS approach to operationalising an official definition of homelessness to estimate those people enumerated in the Census that were likely to have been homeless on Census night.

ABS has developed six Homeless Operational Groups in assessing whether people enumerated in the Census were likely to have been homeless on Census night. These groups are:

- Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out
- Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless
- Persons staying temporarily with other households
- Persons living in boarding houses
- Persons in other temporary lodging
- Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

The first four of the categories are similar to the four groups used by Chamberlain and MacKenzie in their estimates of homelessness developed using Census data.

Estimation for the first four ABS homeless operational groups starts with the concepts and assumptions underlying the Chamberlain and MacKenzie homeless operational groups. ABS tested these assumptions and refined its own estimates to ensure that:

- they reflected the intent and design of the Census variables; and
- a homelessness interpretation of the Census data stands up to scrutiny against the concept and elements in the ABS statistical definition of homelessness (e.g. assessing the extent to which the concept of accommodation alternatives could be operationalised in the Census).

The fifth ABS group 'Persons in other temporary lodging' consists of persons who were classified by Chamberlain and MacKenzie as 'persons in boarding houses'. However these persons, who reported 'no usual address', were enumerated in a 'non-private dwelling' which was classified by its owner or manager as a 'hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast'. These properties were unlikely to have been boarding houses and are included instead in the new ABS group.

People living in severe overcrowding are considered to be in the sixth ABS homeless group because they lack of 'control of and access to space for social relations' (one of the key elements of the ABS definition of homelessness) and are considered not to have accommodation alternatives when remaining in such extreme living arrangements. Severe crowding conditions are operationalised in the Census as living in a dwelling which requires 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, as defined by the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS, See Glossary).

The six ABS homeless operational groups compiled from Census data are described in more detail in Chapter 5 Methodology. That chapter also outlines how each group aligns with the ABS statistical definition and what rules are used to operationalise each group.

Estimates of homelessness are important for providing a prevalence of homelessness on Census night and the characteristics of those who were likely to have been homeless. However, there are people whose living arrangements are close to the statistical boundary of homelessness, and estimates of such people who may be at risk of homelessness can be used to assist policy and service delivery to prevent people becoming homeless. Therefore, estimates, compiled from Census data for specific key groups of people who may be marginally housed, but who are not classified as homeless, will be presented alongside estimates of the homeless operational groups in the publication **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness** (cat. no. 2049). Those groups are:

- Persons living in other crowded dwellings;
- Persons in other improvised dwellings; and
- Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks.

More information about each of these groups, including the rules used to estimate them, are provided in Chapter 5 Methodology.

Later chapters in this Information Paper will cover:

- the ABS statistical definition of homelessness that underpins the methodology (Chapter 3)
- the limitations and issues with using Census data to estimate homelessness (Chapter 4);
- the key differences in methodology employed for estimating homelessness using Census 2006 data and the methodology using Census 2001 data (Chapter 5);
- the process that was undertaken to develop the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census (Chapter 6); and
- the future directions for estimating homelessness from the Census (Chapter 7).

Overview of the Definition of Homelessness

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OVERVIEW OF THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

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OVERVIEW OF THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements may include: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- Security of tenure in the dwelling; and
- Adequacy of the dwelling; and
- Control of, and access to space for social relations.

These elements are explained in more detail in ABS **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat.no. 4922.0).

People must lack one or more of these elements to be defined as homeless. However, people who lack one or more of these elements are not necessarily classified as homeless. While homelessness is not a choice, some people may choose to live in situations that might parallel the living situations of people who are homeless. For example living in a shed while building a home on their own property, or on holiday travelling and staying with friends. These people have choice because they have the capacity to access other accommodation that are safe, adequate and provide for social relations. Having access to accommodation alternatives is contingent on having the financial, physical, psychological **and** personal means to access these alternatives (see ABS **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat.no. 4922.0)).

How the definition of homelessness informs the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census

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HOW THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS INFORMS THE METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS

The ABS **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat.no. 4922.0) outlines which elements of the statistical definition are used in determining homeless living situations in each of the homeless operational groups. That chapter also outlines which parts of the statistical definition cannot be completely operationalised in the Census.

The hierarchy below briefly outlines which elements of the definition are employed to determine the group as being homeless.

How does the hierarchy relate to output categories?

An X indicates what people in this group lack this aspect of the element to determine that their living circumstance is homelessness

Homeless Operational Groups	Security of tenure in the dwelling		Adequacy of the dwelling		Control of, access to social relations		Accommodation alternatives of the person			
	no tenure	initial tenure short & not extendable(a)	no basic facilities exist	structure of dwelling is inadequate	no control or access to space	no privacy	no financial	no personal	no psychological	no physical
Improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out							X**	X**	X**	X**
improvised dwellings	X		X		X	X				
rough sleepers	X		X		X	X				
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	X				X	X				
some transitional housing		X			X	X				
Persons staying temporarily with other households										
Persons staying temporarily with friends or relatives	X				X	X				
Persons staying temporarily in visitor only households	X				X	X				
Persons staying in boarding houses	X				X	X				
Persons staying in other temporary lodging (b)	X				X?	X?				
Severe Crowding										
those who own/have the lease etc.					X	X				
those who do not own/have the lease	X				X	X				

(a) Includes a variety of tenure such as people staying in boarding houses, supported accommodation (long term and short term) and renters on month to month leases.

(b) Note there will be lots of different situations some will lack control of space etc. but all will lack security of tenure.

** An X for accommodation alternatives applies to **any** of the components of financial, personal, physical or psychological resources. If they do not exist the person's situation needs to be further considered in terms of the other elements on the table.

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Limitations and Issues with Using Census Data to Estimate Homelessness

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LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES WITH USING CENSUS DATA TO ESTIMATE HOMELESSNESS

This section contains the following subsection :

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LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES WITH USING THE CENSUS DATA TO ESTIMATE HOMELESSNESS

In summary, the main limitations with using Census data to estimate homelessness can be summarised as:

- under / over-**estimation** - people were enumerated in the Census but the data collected about them is not sufficient to be certain about whether or not they were homeless on Census night;
- under-**enumeration** - people who were not enumerated in the Census.

Under / over estimation and under-enumeration

Observing homeless people in any data collection is a challenge, and the homeless circumstance may mean that these people are not captured at all in datasets used to count people generally. And not all homeless people will be enumerated in data sets of those homeless people accessing particular services for the homeless. The ABS General Social Survey found that of those who had had an experience of homelessness in the last ten years and who were no longer homeless at the time of interview, only 40% had sought assistance of formal services (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a). While data on people who access services are very important data sources to understanding people who access services, they cannot provide an estimate of the total number of homeless people at one point-in-time. Only the Census offers the opportunity to estimate the people who were likely to have been homeless at that one point-in-time.

However, there is an inherent imprecision in estimating homelessness using the Census of Population and Housing because the Census is not designed to classify people according to whether or not they were homeless on Census night. Variables collected in the Census that were designed for other purposes must be interpreted as proxies for likely homelessness. The ABS methodology includes in its homelessness estimates groups of people who, on balance, were most likely to have been homeless on Census night.

While it may be tempting to overestimate homelessness in some groups to compensate for both under-enumeration and likely under-estimation for some other groups, such an approach would result in estimates of characteristics that did not reflect those of the homeless population, including but not limited to their geographic spread. This may result in the misdirection of policy, funds and services. And while a balance between unavoidable under-estimation and deliberate over-estimation may result, this is unlikely, particularly when there is little information on the magnitude of underestimation. It is also very likely to be very different with each Census, destroying the capacity to monitor change over time. Recognising which groups of homeless people are underestimated in the Census, and using supplementary data sources to understand these groups, will both better address the needs of homeless people, and allow for assessments of change over time in the level of homelessness.

ABS recognises that some groups of people are more likely to be under-enumerated in the Census. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to be both underenumerated and overrepresented in the homeless population. ABS has developed strategies for each Census aimed at maximising the enumeration of Indigenous persons (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b and 2006).

So called rough sleepers and people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are also at risk of being under-enumerated in the Census. The ABS develops a homeless enumeration strategy for each Census, and works with homeless service providers to maximise the enumeration of these groups on Census night (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012c and 2008).

The ABS Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is used to estimate for the under enumeration of the Australian population in the Census. However it only covers people in private dwellings at the time of the PES, and therefore will not capture homeless people living in non-private dwellings but who were missed on Census night. Also the PES does not capture sufficient information to determine whether a person is homeless. Furthermore, the PES is a sample survey and the likelihood of including a homeless person in a private dwelling is low. For all of these reasons the PES cannot be used to estimate under-enumeration or under-coverage of homelessness estimates derived from the Census.

Key Population Groups

For some key groups, Census variables provide limited opportunity to estimate those likely to be homeless. Three key groups are:

- homeless youth;
- homeless people displaced due to domestic and family violence; and
- homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Youth

The ABS homeless estimates derived from the Census are likely to underestimate the extent of youth homelessness but there are no data available to determine even approximately the magnitude of the under-estimation.

For some youth (sometimes referred to as 12-18 years or 12-24 years) who are homeless and 'couch surfing', a usual residence may still be reported in the Census. Their homelessness is masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but are simply visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported for 'couch surfers' either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on behalf of the young person staying with them assumes that the youth will return to their home. Homeless youth will be underestimated within the group: 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'.

ABS has not been able to establish any reliable way, with existing data sources, of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers have indicated that the estimates of homeless youth derived from Census data do not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness but there is no information to know the extent of any divergence.

Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG), the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

For analysis on youth homelessness from the Census see ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

Persons displaced due to domestic and family violence

The ABS recognise the difficulties in both enumerating people who are displaced from their home due to domestic and/or family violence, and in classifying all of those that are enumerated correctly as either homeless or not homeless on Census night. Those enumerated in supported accommodation for the homeless will be measured. Some who are in boarding houses, staying temporarily with other households, in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough, or staying in other lodgings such as hotels or motels on Census night and who report no usual address will be classified as homeless. However some will not be able to be distinguished from other people who were visitors on Census night.

Some people who are displaced due to domestic and family violence may not be enumerated in the Census. Out of fear they may not have themselves recorded on a Census form for the dwelling they are staying in. For those who are reported on a Census form as being away from home on Census night, they may be reluctant, for a number of reasons, including stigma, to report having no usual address on Census night. Alternatively, they may have an expectation that they may be able to return to their home in the future and do not see themselves as not having a usual address. As a result they cannot be distinguished from other people who were visiting on Census night and Census based estimates must be recognised as being an underestimate for this group.

The ABS have worked with its HSRG members to look to ways to both improve the enumeration of these homeless people in future Censuses as well as developing alternative sources of information such as the Personal Safety Survey.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been underenumerated in the Census and estimates of homeless based on Census data will be an underestimation. In the 2006 Census, the under-enumeration of Indigenous Australians was 11.5%. Some of those who were under-enumerated may have been homeless at the time of the Census.

Underestimation of homelessness among those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were enumerated in the Census may occur as, for some Indigenous people, 'incorrect' information regarding 'usual residence' may have been provided which masks their homelessness.

It is debated in the literature whether the concept of 'no usual address' is appropriate for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Morphy (2007) discusses the problems in defining a 'usual resident' and 'visitor' in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, as the distinction between 'my country / not my country' is more salient than the distinction between 'resident / visitor'. This issue becomes particularly problematic for people who are highly mobile. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) also discuss the relevance of 'no usual address' to the Indigenous population, as the 'usual address' question is approached with a different cultural frame of reference. They note that it is not culturally appropriate to record 'no usual address' on Census night because 'home' is understood in a different way, particularly when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are staying with their extended family. Due to the different cultural frame of reference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is widely assumed that the Western concept of 'no usual address' is under-reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2008). This issue will impact on Census based estimates of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons

enumerated in the Census who are classified as being in the categories of 'improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out', or temporarily visiting friends or relatives while homeless.

While the increased effort in the 2011 Census to improve the enumeration of Indigenous Australians was successful, under enumeration is still large, and the difficulties in differentiating between those who may be homeless remain.

In recognition of the differences in understanding of the concepts of home and homelessness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, the ABS is undertaking further research about how the ABS statistical definition of homelessness may be understood in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context. The ABS will establish a sub group of the HSRG to provide recommendations to the HSRG for the development of a definition relevant to homelessness in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context. Any recommendations from this group will be considered by the ABS in both Census enumeration and subsequent estimation of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The ABS will also work to develop a culturally appropriate module on previous experiences of homelessness suitable for inclusion in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey which can be compared to estimates from the total population from the 2014 General Social Survey.

Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census should be considered to be an underestimate.

For analysis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census see the ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

Interpretation of usual residence question in the Census

The 'usual residence' or usual address variable in the Census is designed, for Census purposes, to report on: population characteristics by small area; and to report mobility i.e., current usual address versus address one and five years ago.

Interpretation of Census data on 'usual address' without reference to other information reported in the Census as an approximation to homelessness is incorrect due to the way the question is worded and the intent of the question.

The ABS Census asks people to report a usual address. The instructions for reporting are to write in:

"the address at which the person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more in the relevant Census year. For persons who have no usual address write NONE..."

The advice, if enquired, to people completing the Census form and who move around is that a usual address is somewhere you have lived or intend to live for six months or more, otherwise writing 'none' in the usual address question is the appropriate answer.

There are a very wide range of reasons why a person may not have stayed, or be intending to stay, at a particular address for 6 months or more in a particular Census year. In the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing about 16% of household reference persons reported having lived at their current private dwelling address for less than 1 year, implying that on average, at least 250,000 people change address each month (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009b).

People will have moved from a former usual address for many reasons, for example moving for study or work, or upon retirement. Some of these movers may be temporarily accommodated in their new city or town, and at the time of the Census cannot report a future address of the home that they have not yet rented or bought.

People who moved in July or August, just before the Census, might report their former home as the place they had lived for at least 6 months, but may consider it odd to report this old address as their 'usual' address. It is considered unlikely that people report a former usual address as their current usual address after they have permanently left that address, or left it on a long term basis. The design of the Census 'usual address' question for reporting on mobility, and for supporting population measures, would be undermined if people did report their old usual addresses to which they would not be returning, or not returning for quite some time. By reporting 'no usual address' these people are counted in the population where they are enumerated, and counted as movers from their former usual address.

People moving to step up in either the jobs market or the residential property market, or people capitalising on their lifelong residential investment when they retire, may temporarily not own any property while between investments, but are unlikely to experience the forms of social exclusion that affect people who fit a more traditional view of homelessness. For example, as reported in ABC radio interviews, families moving from Queensland to Karratha to rent a slab on which to park their caravan reported that 'the money was just too good to refuse'. Such families would certainly benefit from cheaper housing options in their new area in the long term, either to rent or to add to their holdings of owned premises, but the issues for social inclusion are less likely to reflect the entrenched disadvantage (or risk of such disadvantage) that characterises the homeless population as defined by the ABS definition of homelessness, see **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

The ABS uses reporting of no usual address as a starting point to identify anyone who may be homeless and then refines this broad inclusion by analysing these people to identify, on balance, groups of people who are unlikely to be homeless. The areas of exploration of those reporting no usual address but on balance as a group are unlikely to be homeless include those identified as overseas students in group houses, 'grey nomads' travelling in their caravans after retirement, and a wide range of other people in visitor only households, especially those renting in holiday destinations, and sharing holiday

accommodation with other families that do report a usual residence, and recently arrived migrants or residents returning to Australia who, similar to internal migration situations, have not yet had the opportunity to select their permanent home. Some of these people in these groups are clearly not staying with usual residents in a household, while others are staying in a substantial dwelling that they may own in a holiday destination but which may be a second or third home and is not their 'usual residence' in a Census year.

See Chapter 5 methodology for more information on those people who are, on balance, not classified as homeless.

Identification of non-private dwellings and private dwellings

Both non-private and private dwellings are important in identifying where people who may be homeless are enumerated. NPDs include places such as hotels, motels, staff quarters, boarding houses, prisons, hospitals etc. Once it is established whether people are enumerated in a private or non-private dwelling, different assumptions must be applied to determine whether the occupants in the dwelling are, on balance, most likely to be homeless or not on Census night.

Non-private dwelling are initially identified by a Census Area Supervisor and confirmed as such by the owners and managers of those properties. Census collectors may also find a non-private dwelling missed by the supervisor, and in these cases the usual owner verification is followed. All other dwellings identified as structures which are intended to have people live in them, and which are habitable on Census night, are classified as private dwellings. However, it is possible that some private dwellings may be operated on Census night as an illegal boarding house.

The boarding house classification of NPDs by their owners appears to work reasonably well in field. However, the classification is not designed to only capture boarding houses for the homeless - it also captures dwellings such as regional accommodation serving children from multiple schools, which need to be removed for the purposes of estimating homelessness.

If a private dwelling is being operated illegally on the basis of multiple room by room tenancies, the area supervisor and collector may enumerate it according to its legal and apparent basis of operation as a private dwelling and not as a boarding house. The methodology (see Chapter 5) applies rules for large (apparently) unrelated group households in order to try to identify, and include as homeless accommodation, any private dwellings that may be operating as boarding houses. However this method is limited and may overestimate the number of large (apparently) group households as boarding houses due to the limitations of the Census in capturing all relationships in the household.

The Census only captures the relationships in relation to the first person listed on the household form, and for child relationships to person 2. Therefore, people in the household who are a couple, but neither person has a relationship to person 1, will not be reflected as a couple. Households with 5 or more usual residents may therefore be incorrectly classified as group households and could incorrectly be assumed to be a boarding house for the homeless. When a usual resident on Census night is temporarily absent, failure to take this into account can also lead to wrong assumptions about the nature of both the household and the dwelling.

By just relying on the NPDs classification returned from the field for estimating these populations, it is possible that some supported accommodation dwellings and some illegal boarding houses will be misclassified as private dwellings. The methodology outlined in Chapter 5 shows how these dwellings are treated, in particular to help ensure that people in 'group houses' are treated correctly.

To ensure that people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are correctly classified, the ABS obtains lists of homeless supported accommodation to correctly flag these dwellings as homeless accommodation. ABS also supplies green stickers to homeless services, who encourage their clients to place the sticker on their Census form and then post their form back to the ABS. The ABS then flags these dwellings as being supported accommodation for the homeless.

Some people living specific living situations in NPDs on Census night are not included in the definition of homelessness. While these living situations lack one or more of the key elements of 'home' identified in the definition of homelessness, the people occupying these places are not regarded as homeless. People in these living situations are not classified as homeless as:

- they may have chosen to live in these circumstances and have accommodation alternatives; or
- are required by law to living in these circumstances; or
- are acceptable temporary living arrangements (such as student halls of residence); or
- it is essential for their broader health and well-being to be living in these conditions.

The specific exclusions include:

- people **confined** in prisons, detention centres and other institutions such as juvenile correctional facilities or hospitals;
- students living in halls of residence; and
- members of religious orders such as monks and nuns living in seminaries and nunneries and similar establishments.

Boarding houses

The definition of homelessness includes residents of boarding houses as homeless if they:

- do not have control of or access to space and or no privacy; OR

- have no tenure or initial tenure short and not extendable.

If it is assumed that people living in boarding houses do not have either of these elements and do not have accommodation alternatives, so they are considered homeless.

However, some residents of boarding houses have secure tenure and have access to space and privacy. These people would not be considered to be homeless, even if they do not have accommodation alternatives. The Census has some information which allows the ABS to establish whether a dwelling is most likely to be a boarding house. However it does not offer enough information about occupants security of tenure, or their access to space for social relations. Therefore, determining which occupants are homeless is difficult. In the absence of this information, on balance the ABS has included all people in these dwellings, who are either usual residents (excluding staff) or visitors reporting no usual address, as homeless. This is likely to result in an over estimate of people who are homeless when assessed against the ABS definition. The ABS does, however report those in boarding houses as a separate category to aid policy and service provision. This is because in some State and Territories boarding houses are used to move people out of other forms of homelessness, such as rough sleeping or couch surfing, towards more independent, secure, long-term accommodation.

Although the ABS makes a significant effort to identify boarding houses, both registered and unregistered, the ABS acknowledge that there will potentially be an under estimation of people living in boarding houses in estimates of homelessness, and an overestimation of those living in boarding houses who are likely to be homeless according to the ABS definition. For future Censuses, the ABS will look at ways to improve the identification of boarding houses such as obtaining lists from relevant sources - both those that are registered and those that are not, and whether more information can be obtained about the facilities and tenures offered in registered boarding houses.

Supported accommodation for the homeless

As outlined in above, the ABS obtains lists of homeless supported accommodation and uses a 'green sticker strategy'.

However, the nature of the provision of accommodation to homeless people in need of housing support services is changing. In the lead up to the next Census, procedures will be reviewed to ensure that people in new forms of supported accommodation are correctly classified. Advice from service providers will be used about clients who are accommodated using vouchers or 'brokerage' in hotels, caravan parks etc to classify them as people in supported accommodation for the homeless.

Transitional Housing Management Units

Long-term supported accommodation, often described as Transitional Housing Management (THM) Units, often provides some security of tenure, and the dwellings are adequate (including basic kitchen facilities and a bathroom) and the household has privacy and exclusive use of those basic facilities. The THMs that meet these levels of housing would, under the ABS statistical definition of homelessness, not be classified as homeless. However persons living in those THMs that lack one or more of these elements would be classified as homeless.

Unfortunately, the lists of supported accommodation that the ABS obtained for the 2006 Census did not separately identify THMs from other crisis accommodation, nor report information about the elements of homelessness. Therefore all THMs are indistinguishably included in the broader estimate of 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless'. For 2011, the ABS did receive information from some jurisdictions about THM but not obtain any of the requested information about the facilities or the tenures offered. The ABS is analysing the list information received for 2011 to consider ways in which it can better separately identify THMs from and other supported accommodation in future Censuses.

Imputed records

Census collectors are required to visit 'private' dwellings 5 times (at different times and on different days) to try to make contact.

Where contact cannot be made, collectors are encouraged to speak to neighbours, or a 'credible source' about whether the dwelling was occupied on Census night.

If the collector is not 'absolutely certain' that the 'private' dwelling was not occupied on Census night, system imputation follows.

No imputation was undertaken for or is required for NPDs (e.g., boarding houses, or supported as determined by area supervisors to be NPDs and their classification described by the owner/manager).

No imputation is undertaken for 'rough sleepers', but is undertaken for improvised dwellings.

For the 2006 Census imputation, 766,000 persons were imputed to be in non-contact private dwellings.

For about a third of the imputed people (about 275,000), people were imputed where the collector obtained information that there were some people in the dwelling on Census night - the number and sex of the people is obtained. For these records, the collector record book information on dwelling type, structure and location, is used together with the third party reported numbers of people by sex, to find a 'donor' dwelling near by to replicate the age, sex, usual residence (or 'place of enumeration') and registered marital status of that donor dwelling onto the imputed household in the non-contact dwelling. No other variables are imputed.

The remaining two thirds (about 500,000 people) where no information could be obtained as to whether or not the dwelling was occupied on Census night, are fully imputed based on looking for a donor record based on dwelling type, structure and location.

Imputed records are retained in the estimates of homelessness for the group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' (SAAP). While some SAAP properties were enumerated as NPDs in the 2006 Census, most were enumerated as private dwellings and reassigned a SAAP flag based on the lists of SAAP properties provided by jurisdictions. In the flagged properties where no contact was made, about 860 people were imputed using a credible source to confirm the occupation of the dwelling on Census night. Another 1,110 people were imputed without a credible source. While only a third of the national rates of imputation were undertaken with a credible source, for SAAP the rate was closer to 50%.

For listed SAAP properties it is known that the property is not a second home, nor a holiday home or a vacant property up for either sale, demolition or renting etc. And for nearly half of the imputations a credible source is used and no more information is needed to confirm the homeless state of the people in the dwelling on Census night. For the 1,110 or so imputed from a 'donor' record, this estimate may understate or overstate the numbers of homeless people actually in those SAAP properties on Census night. However, the scale of any such error is not likely to be large nor biased (an estimation error on only about 6% of total SAAP accommodation on Census night) and the inclusion of the imputed records lifts the Census estimates slightly to align broadly with Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) estimates of SAAP accommodation on Census night, suggesting no significant overestimate.

Imputed records for people staying in non-contact private dwellings are excluded from the homeless estimates because there is no certainty about the nature of the dwelling occupancy on Census night (it might be a second home, a holiday home or a vacant property up for either sale, demolition or renting etc.) and no information is available about the characteristics of the occupants to assess their likely homelessness.

Further detail on the treatment of imputed records for relevant groups is in Chapter 5.

Income

Income is used to assist in classifying people as likely to be homeless. Across the different group, ABS has used individual income and household income, depending on the living situation being assessed. The income thresholds are adjusted for each Census to remain relevant with increases in income over time. More detail on the reasons for the use of particular income thresholds is included in the relevant groups in Appendix 1.

People not classified as homeless

ABS homelessness estimates relate to usual residents of Australia and do not include overseas visitors. Nor do they include people who were enumerated in offshore oil rigs, drilling platforms etc, or who were on board a ship in Australian waters or on an overnight journey by train or bus.

People enumerated in Other territories are not included in the homelessness estimates.

Key differences between methodology employed for estimating homelessness for different Census years

Income, mortgage and rent cut offs

The use of Income, mortgage and rent cut offs in the rules for estimating homelessness are adjusted for each Census year using data from Survey of Income and Housing and the Consumer Price Index where appropriate. The cut offs for 2006 and 2001 are outlined in the rules in Chapter 5. The cut offs for estimates for the 2011 Census will be published with the 2011 estimates in **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011** (cat. no. 2049.0). See Appendix 1 for more information on the cut offs for income, mortgage and rent for 2006 and 2001.

Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless

While the list and green sticker strategies for SAAP properties were undertaken in the 2001 the information was not retained. Therefore, for 2001 homelessness estimates of persons in supported accommodation for the homeless, the ABS will use data from the AIHW Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) collection on the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night for every state and territory except Victoria. The Department of Human Services (Victoria) provided the ABS with a comprehensive list of their SAAP and THM properties, this was used along with the national SAAP data collection (to establish the number of women in domestic violence services) to provide an overall estimate of number of people in SAAP accommodation for Victoria in 2001.

However, the homelessness SAAP estimates for 2001 are only for totals and by State and Territory and no Census demographic characteristics are available. Nor is it possible to remove overlaps between the AIHW based estimate and the other homeless operational groups which can be directly estimated using Census data, which will result in some minor over estimation.

Persons in Boarding Houses

For homeless estimates of persons in boarding houses, in addition to using information about non-private dwellings

classified as boarding houses in the Census, rules are applied to:

- reclassify dwellings enumerated as private dwellings that were more likely to be boarding houses; and
- reclassify as boarding houses some other types of non-private dwellings

The same basic rules for 2001 and 2006 are consistently applied as a starting point. However for 2006, additional information was available from this Census about need for assistance with core activities and volunteering to further refine the rules used reclassify as boarding houses dwellings that were enumerated as private dwellings. The refinements aim to better classify dwellings that were more likely to be convents or monasteries (and other similar religious institutions) and to remove dwellings more likely to be facilities for the aged. These two data items can not be used for the 2001 estimates as they were not collected in the 2001 Census. And as noted above, any dwellings incorrectly classified as boarding houses in 2001 that were SAAP properties cannot be removed from the boarding house estimates. The 2001 estimates may therefore overstate the homeless in boarding houses.

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METHODOLOGY USED TO CALCULATE HOMELESS ESTIMATES

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- Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless
- Persons staying temporarily with other households
- Persons in boarding houses
- Persons staying in other temporary lodging
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METHODOLOGY USED TO CALCULATE HOMELESS ESTIMATES

This chapter sets out the consistent, transparent and repeatable ABS methodology for estimating the number of people enumerated in the Census who may be homeless on Census night.

On 11 September 2012 the ABS will publish its official homelessness estimates from both the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, consistent with the methodology outlined in this chapter, in the publication **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0). Official estimates of homelessness from the 2011 Census, using the same methodology, will be published on 12 November 2012 under the same catalogue number, after Census second release variables are published on 30 October 2012.

The ABS methodology will be applied in producing homelessness estimates from future Censuses. However, improvements are expected to be made to both questions and field procedures which will provide for new and better estimates for tracking future changes in homelessness. The transparency and repeatability in the methodology will allow for an alternate estimate to be made that is consistent with 2011 to provide a link in monitoring changes over time.

Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out

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PERSONS IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS, SLEEPERS OUT

Estimating the homeless operational group 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleeper out' commences by first considering the group of Australian residents who were enumerated in the Census in an 'improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out' and who reported either being at home on Census night or having 'no usual address'.

The Census does not directly collect any data on the adequacy of the dwelling element of the ABS definition of homelessness, and it assumed that 'improvised dwelling...' category is a reasonable proxy, although both field and processing errors may overstate this group.

Nor does the Census currently directly collect information about accommodation alternatives and proxy measures are needed to identify indicators of accommodation alternatives.

However, neither the usual address question nor the dwelling category recorded by Census collectors was designed to measure homelessness (see Chapter 4 for information about the purpose of the usual address question). Analysis of the reported characteristics of persons enumerated in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out, shows that many were unlikely to have been homelessness.

There are a range of reasons why people may be in a dwelling classified as improvised and which is reported as their usual address but who, however, are not likely to be homeless. The notes recorded by the Census collectors point to a likely explanation. In the 2006 Census, the notes show that some dwellings classified as improvised dwellings were new homes being progressively occupied, or reflect large numbers of construction staff living in site sheds ('improvised dwellings') as they build new suburbs, or highways and similar construction tasks. Some of the records classified as improvised dwellings appear to relate to owner builders living in a shed or similar dwelling while building their home on their own property.

The ABS rules to classify as homeless people enumerated in improvised dwellings on Census night are presented in the table below. The rules aim to avoid misclassification of the majority of the construction workers or owner builders who would have accommodation alternatives. Failure to do so will result in homelessness estimates being driven by building booms (when homelessness will appear to rise) and down-turns (when it will appear to fall) and present an odd occupational grouping of the homeless. During the Census in 2006 there was a boom in construction but between the 2006 and 2011 the global financial crisis occurred and may have reduced the levels of both construction workers accommodated away from home and owner builders living on their own property and building a home.

To approximate the concept of accommodation alternatives applied to this group, variables such as tenure, income, rent and mortgage payments are used.

Imputation occurs for an improvised dwelling which may have been occupied on Census night and about which the collector was not '**absolutely certain** was unoccupied' but for which no contact could be made. These imputed people may not exist, or may be counted elsewhere at their primary residence. Some of the imputations will be for improvised dwellings which may be occupied only on a semi-permanent basis such as a shed on a block where a more substantial dwelling is being built or a shack occupied periodically on weekends or while the owner of the land is on holiday. No imputation is undertaken for rough sleepers.

In summary, in 2006 there were about 12,000 people enumerated in improvised dwellings as either being at home or with no usual address, from which about two thirds were classified as not being homeless based on the rules for estimating homelessness. There were 659 records imputed in improvised dwellings as either being at home or with no usual address where there was no corroborating information that the dwelling was occupied on Census night, but also no strong evidence that it was not occupied on Census night. And a further 512 imputed records where no form was collected but a count of the numbers of people in the improvised dwellings was obtained by the collector from a third party. Together these imputed records account for more about 10% of those enumerated on forms in these dwellings. This imputation rate is more than double that of the national average rate of imputation, and suggests that the nature of these dwellings leads to over imputation.

The rules applied to estimate the homeless population from the improvised dwelling count require the use of tenure, rent and mortgage payments, and labour force status, to eliminate the mobile construction workers, hobby farmers, owner builders etc. Where these items are 'not stated' people are assumed to be homeless. However, imputed records have no such information. It is likely that even if the imputed records related to people who should have been enumerated in such dwellings, two thirds would be expected to be removed from the homelessness estimates if we had their full information. However, the high imputation rates suggests that many of these records reflect over imputation.

While it is possible that a few of the imputed records do relate to a person who was homeless on Census night, we know neither their characteristics nor their location. Arbitrarily including a few imputed records adds nothing to the analysis or understanding of this homeless population and potentially skews the resulting distributions of characteristics.

For more information on analysis of this group see the ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

Rules for estimating Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in improvised dwellings, tents and sleepers out. The rules start with the broad Census dwelling category of 'improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out' and refines the category to avoid misclassifying as homeless those groups of people who were unlikely to be homeless on Census night.

PERSONS WHO ARE IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS OR SLEEPERS OUT

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in an improvised home, tent, sleepers out	
2	Minus	All persons who reported a usual address elsewhere in Australia and overseas visitors	Australian holiday makers and international visitors - these people are not homeless
3	Equals	All persons enumerated in an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out who reported being 'at home' or having 'no usual address'	
4	Minus	All imputed records ^a	There is little evidence that all these people exist. For those that do, most would be removed using the other rules if the information were available. The imputed dwellings are most likely dwellings which are occupied on an intermittent basis where the occupants were enumerated (or even imputed) at their principal residence
5	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned outright, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, being rented, or being occupied under a life tenure scheme where at least one person was employed full-time ^b	People for whom the nature of their employment indicates that, on balance, their accommodation could be because of their employment e.g. construction workers, road workers; and others in their own dwelling
6	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of being occupied rent free, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where at least one person was employed full-time, and the combined income of all persons in the dwelling was at least \$2,000/week ^{b,c}	People who, on balance, were mostly likely construction workers, road workers etc.
7	Minus	Any person who reported being 'at home' in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned outright where no one was employed full-time ^b	People who, on balance, were most likely owner builders / hobby farmers
8	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned with a mortgage with reported mortgage repayments of at least \$1,050/month where no one was employed full-time ^{b,c}	People who, on balance, were most likely owner builders / hobby farmers
9	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of being rented with reported rental payments of at least \$300/week where no one was employed full-time ^{b,c}	People for whom the rental payments indicate they could rent elsewhere (have accommodation alternatives)
	Equals	Those who are likely to be homeless	

^aimputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector

^bThe variables 'number of people employed' and 'combined income' do not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. Therefore a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time or has an income doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being homeless

^cIn 2001 the combined income cut off was \$1,594/week, the mortgage repayment cut off was \$845/month and the rental payment cut off was \$265/week.

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Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless

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PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS

To estimate the number of people in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night in 2006, first, ABS included all persons in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified by the building owner / manager as 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge'. ABS then added people who were in dwellings flagged as being supported accommodation using the Census list and green sticker strategies.

(To estimate the number of people in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night in 2001, although the list and green sticker strategies were used, the data was not retained, and data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) collection on the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night were used. See 'Key differences between methodology employed for estimating homelessness for different Census years - Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' for more information.)

Imputed records were not removed from this group because of the certainty of the nature of the dwellings and the irrelevance of other personal characteristics to ascertain homeless for people staying in SAAP properties. See 'Imputed records' for more information.

To align this group with the ABS definition of homelessness, the rules apply the element security of tenure in the dwelling with lack of accommodation alternatives. The vetting process to allocate people to the short supply of supported accommodation is unlikely to provide supported accommodation for those people who have alternatives.

Some supported accommodation, such as some transitional housing, may not meet the definition of homelessness because the tenants have security of tenure in the dwelling. However, information in the Census cannot distinguish the transitional housing properties that have security of tenure. The ABS will investigate the possibility of separately identifying these in future Censuses.

Rules for estimating Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless

The following table presents the rules that are applied to identify the persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in supported accommodation for the homeless. The rules start with the Census non-private dwelling category of 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' and adds persons who were in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation through the 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies. It also removes any overlaps that occur with the 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out' that were already identified as homeless.

PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS

Estimating homelessness 2006 and beyond

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' by a building owner / manager, where the person reported a residential status of "Guest, patient, inmate, other resident" or "Not stated"	Include people residing in non-private dwellings offering supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night
2	Plus	Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation who reported being neither an overseas visitor nor an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family'	Include people enumerated in private dwelling identified as being supported accommodation for the homeless
3	Minus	Any person not identified above who reported being either an overseas visitor or an "owner, proprietor, staff and family"	Remove overseas visitors and 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' in supported accommodation
	Equals	Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	

Estimating homelessness 2001

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		Counts of the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night 2001 from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Supported Accommodation Assistance Program collection for every state and territory except Victoria.	Census data for persons in supported accommodation for the homeless identified through the list and green sticker strategies are not available
2	Plus	Persons accommodated in SAAP in Victoria from data from the AIHW SAAP collection and Department of Human Services (Victoria) for Victoria	AIHW SAAP data alone did not provide a full estimate of those in SAAP accommodation on Census night 2001.
	Equals	Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	

Persons staying temporarily with other households

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PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

The homeless operational group 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' commences with analysis of persons enumerated in any private dwelling structure (except an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out) and who reported having 'No usual address'.

This group will contain people who were visiting on Census night for a range of reasons including those who are 'couch surfing'. It is unlikely that all of the people enumerated as 'visitors' without a usual address being reported on Census night meet the definition of homelessness.

People in private dwellings who report no usual address fall into two groups:

- visitors who report having no usual address and staying in a dwelling that also contains usual residents of that dwelling; and
- people staying in 'visitor only households' who report no usual address' and there are no usual residents in the dwelling.

Given the differences in the living circumstances of these people on Census night, each group needs to be considered using different judgements to determine whether the persons in the group are, on balance, most likely to be homeless. Some of the people in 'visitor only households' will be families moving to a new location for work, people who have recently moved to, or returned to Australia and have not have not, or will not be living in their current property for six months or more in the Census year (given the Census takes place in August). In these circumstances they have correctly answered that they have no usual address, but are not homeless.

Many other people in this visitor only household group are people travelling on Census night. Of these, the ABS classified one group as 'grey nomads' who were unlikely to be homeless and therefore were not included in the homeless population. Grey nomads are defined as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling reported no usual address, were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night. The phenomenon of people travelling around Australia in their retirement is growing, and in 2006 the great majority of these 'grey nomads' were enumerated in holiday destinations in the northern beaches in NSW, Queensland, Northern Territory and northern Western Australia.

Another group of people in 'visitor only households' were staying in properties (other than caravans, cabins or houseboats) where the property was owned outright or on which they reported mortgage repayments. They were not staying with friends or relatives. These people were not included in the homeless estimates as the judgement was made that they report no usual address because they are either travelling or moving primary residence, and staying in their holiday or second home at the time of the Census.

Another group of people in visitor only households were staying in properties (other than caravans, cabins or houseboats) that they were renting. These people are not staying with friends or relatives and their characteristics suggested that they were travelling rather than being homeless on Census night.

The ABS also classified as not homeless people who were, on balance, most likely to be new migrants to Australia or returning to Australia to live. They were people who reported being overseas in August 2005, and who were renting or occupying premises on Census night and reporting no usual address. For new migrants the year of arrival was 2006. On balance, most of the people within this group were unlikely to be homeless and had just not yet had the opportunity to settle in or back into Australia, or if they arrived in July or August would not be able to occupy their current address for six months in the year of the Census.

The ABS recognises that there are a number of groups (See Chapter 4 for more information) that would be underrepresented in this homeless group of 'persons staying temporarily with other households'. These include youth, people fleeing domestic and/or family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who may be homeless but for whom a usual address on Census night is reported. They can not be identified from those people who were visitors on Census night (such as those on family holidays, visiting relatives etc.). This 'invisibility' for some of the homeless condition in the Census dataset should be taken into consideration when using the data for this group.

ABS has not yet been able to implement any reliable way of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers indicate that the low estimates of homeless youth staying with other households does not concord with their knowledge about youth

homelessness. Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

In 2006 there were 1,928 imputed records for 'visitors' with no usual address, which are not classified as homeless. In reviewing the reported visitors with no usual address in visitor only households, 86% were determined, on balance, not to be homeless based on the detailed characteristics of the groups that can be studied among these households that suggests more plausible interpretations of the reporting of no usual address. Many of the dwellings housing 'visitor only' households for whom a usual address was not reported were in holiday areas (e.g. the snow and coastal Queensland). These geographical areas may have many dwellings for holiday makers as well as second residences. These dwellings could look occupied on Census night but may not have been because the owners were in their primary residence on Census night or because the holiday dwelling was not rented out on Census night but was at other times during the Census period. Any records imputed based on the selection of a responding property in a similar location is likely to be at least as likely (86%) to generate a false signal for homelessness as determined for the reported visitor only households. While there are some imputations of households with both usual residents and visitors with no usual address, again the locations of these properties and the higher than average likelihood of non-contact in these areas suggest the visitor imputations are unlikely to reflect homelessness. On balance there is no strong evidence that the imputations reflect homeless.

More analysis on these groups can be found in the previous ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

To align this group with the definition of homelessness, the rules apply the 'element' of the dwelling 'security of tenure of the dwelling' in that the visitors have no tenure. They also do not have 'control, or access to social relations' and therefore this element is also lacking. Other variables are used to remove the groups of people who would, on balance, most likely have accommodation alternatives (such as grey nomads, construction workers, recent migrants, other travellers). This leaves the remainder of the people in this homeless category as those without accommodation alternatives and thus homeless.

Rules for estimating Persons staying temporarily with other households

The following table presents the rules that are applied to identify the persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying temporarily with other households. The rule starts with the broad Census dwelling category of persons enumerated in a private dwelling (which was not classified as an improvised dwelling, tents, sleepers out) and who reported no usual address. The category is then refined to remove those groups of people who were unlikely to be homeless on Census night for the two different groups:

- visitors who report having no usual address and staying in a dwelling that also contains usual residents of that dwelling; and
- people staying in 'visitor only households'. This is where there are people in the dwelling reporting having 'no usual address' and there are no usual residents in the dwelling.

PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling which was not classified as an improvised home, tent, sleepers out who reported 'no usual address'	
2	Minus	Any person who was in a dwelling where all persons in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, reported 'no usual address', were not in the labour force, and were staying in a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat'	Persons who on balance, would most likely to be 'grey nomads' and who were travelling and would have accommodation alternatives
3	Minus	Any person in a 'visitor only' household staying in a caravan, cabin or houseboat (except for persons in a 'caravan/residential park or camping ground' who report a tenure of being 'occupied rent free' or a tenure type of 'being rented' but not stating their weekly rent payments)	Persons who on balance, would be most likely to be travelling except those who appear to be clients of supported accommodation services who were referred to caravan parks
4	Minus	Any person in a 'visitor only' household that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.' and which was owned either outright or with a mortgage, or being rented	Persons who, on balance, were most likely to be moving frequently for employment reasons, staying in their second dwelling or who have moved after retirement etc.
5	Minus	Any person who was born overseas, first arrived in Australia in the Census calendar year and wasn't born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia ^a	Persons who, on balance, were most likely to be very recent migrants to Australia who at the time of the Census have not had time to choose their home and report a usual residence according to Census definitions
6	Minus	Any person who was born in Australia and reported being overseas the year before the Census	Australians who, on balance, were most likely to be recently returning residents and who at the time of the Census have not had time to choose their home and report a usual residence according to Census definitions
7	Minus	All imputed records ^b	There is little evidence that these people even exist, in addition the 'no usual address' status has been imputed. Removes double counting for some 'visitor only' dwellings which were in holiday areas and may have appeared occupied when in fact they were not
8	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' ^c	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting
Equals		Those who are likely to be homeless	

^aThe top ten countries for humanitarian settlers are sourced from the list of 'humanitarian settler arrivals by birth place' in the 'Immigration Update' publication by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. They are for the financial year ending July of the Census year.

^bImputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

^cIn 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not used for supported accommodation in 2001.

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Persons in boarding houses

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PERSONS IN BOARDING HOUSES

The homeless operational group 'Persons in boarding houses' commences with analysis of persons enumerated in non-private dwellings that were classified as 'boarding houses, private hotel'. It is expected that in most cases these boarding houses have been correctly identified as boarding houses by the owner/manager. However, because the boarding house category is not designed to approximate homelessness, it will include some student halls of residence that are not part of any one school but serve multiple schools in a region. Rules are used to exclude those dwellings that, on balance appear to be more likely to be a student hall of residence.

The rules also aim to identify other NPDs that were not classified as boarding houses but where the characteristics of the people in the dwelling suggest that they may be housing large numbers of homeless people and can be assumed, on

balance, to more likely to be a boarding house although they were classified by the owner / manager as 'staff quarters', 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' or as a dwelling type that was not classifiable, or a classification was not stated.

The rules also attempt to identify any dwellings that were identified by Area Supervisors and Census collectors as private dwellings but the characteristics of the occupants are such that, on balance, it is more likely to be a boarding house rather than a large (apparently) unrelated group household. If a dwelling is private dwelling, but operates illegally on the basis of multiple room by room tenancies, the Area Supervisor and collector may enumerate it according to its legal presentation rather than on the basis of its unobserved operation as a boarding house. The rules are applied to identify these dwelling amongst large (apparently) unrelated group households. However, this method is limited and is likely to overestimate the number of large (apparently) group households as boarding houses due to the limitations of the Census in capturing all relationships in the household. The Census only captures the relationships to the first person on the household form (and child relationships to person 2) so if people in the household are in couple relationship but neither of the couple is reported as person 1, then such households with 5 or more usual residents may be incorrectly classified as group households rather than the family household it really is. That same household may then also be incorrectly assumed to be a boarding house and its residents classified as homeless. The correct classification of households as family households can also be affected when there are persons who were temporarily absent (PTAs) on Census night.

Rules are applied to these large (apparently) unrelated group households to ensure that, on balance, households such as student households, retirement villages, nursing homes, homes for the disabled, convents / monasteries and other religious institutions are not incorrectly reclassified as boarding houses for the homeless.

The same rules for 2001 and 2006 are applied, however for 2006, additional information available from this Census about need for assistance with core activities and volunteering is used to refine the rules to assist with ensuring the best possible reclassification of private dwellings as boarding houses. The aim of using these variables is to remove dwellings that were more likely to be convents or monasteries (and other similar religious institutions) and to remove dwellings more likely to be facilities for the aged. These two items were not collected in the 2001 Census. The rules for 2001 therefore omit these steps which refine the classification of boarding houses.

To determine, on balance, that the dwelling is most likely to have been a boarding house for homeless people, variables such as labour force status, student status, income, tenure type, need for assistance with core activities, religion and volunteering are used. These are shown in more detail in the table below. All of the variables such as income are applied to the individual in private dwellings rather than considering the household income because if they are in boarding houses individuals would not be sharing their economic resources.

In summary, people in boarding houses are assumed to lack 'control of, and access to social relations', and their staying in boarding houses is assumed to reflect the lack of accommodation alternatives that would not be homeless. Note that halls of residence for students, dwellings for members of religious orders and institutions such as hospitals are not boarding houses.

Rules for estimating Persons in boarding houses

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in boarding houses. The rules start with all persons enumerated in dwellings that were classified as 'boarding house, private hotel'. Then additional rules are applied to remove dwellings that are student halls of residences. Rules are applied to 'staff quarters' to pick up any that, on balance, were more likely to be boarding houses. Rules are also applied to 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' and 'other and not classifiable' or 'not stated' dwellings to identify if, on balance, they were more likely to be boarding houses. Finally rules are applied to private dwellings which appear to be large unrelated group households, to determine if, on balance, they are more likely to be boarding houses.

PERSONS STAYING IN BOARDING HOUSES

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'boarding house, private hotel', where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night and where less than 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a weekly income of \$600 or more ^a	Boarding house residents who were not staff/owners/managers etc. or who reported a usual address elsewhere. Overseas visitors are also not considered.
2	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'Boarding house, private hotel' who reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night and where less than 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'employed'	As above
3	Minus	Persons in steps 1 and 2 above where at least 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	On balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence
4	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'staff quarters' where at least 60% of people in that dwelling reported a weekly income of less than \$600 a week and less than 60% of people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'employed' ^a	Dwellings which were classified as staff quarters which may, on balance, be boarding houses
5	Minus	Persons in step 4 where at least 60% of people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence
6	Minus	Persons in step 4 who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Remove persons who were owners / managers or staff and their family
7	Minus	Persons in step 4 who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors
8	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'Hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' in a dwelling where at least 75% of people in that dwelling reported a	Reclassify 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' which may, on balance, be boarding houses

		weekly income of less than \$600 a week and at least 75% of people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' and at least 20% of people in that dwelling reported being 'At home' ²	
9	Minus	Persons in step 8 where more than 25% of people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	On balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence
10	Minus	Persons in steps 8 who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Remove persons who were owners / managers staff or family
11	Minus	Persons in steps 8 who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors
12	Plus	<p>All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'Other and not classifiable' or 'Not stated', where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' in a dwelling and where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> less than 90% of identified people in that dwelling reported being under 20 years of age and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND less than 85% of identified people who also attended a 'stated' type of educational institution or didn't attend an educational institution in that dwelling reported attending any type of educational institution and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND less than 90% of identified people in that dwelling reported a 'stated' religious belief and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND less than 50% of identified people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'Employed' and who reported being 'At home' or having 'No usual address' AND 	<p>People who, on balance, were more likely to be in a boarding house that was enumerated in NPDs classified as other non private dwellings, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> correctional institutions for children, boarding schools, residential colleagues and halls of residence convents, monasteries and other religious institutions hotels, motels and staff quarters because the majority of their adult residents are employed retirement villages and nursing homes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> less than 85% of identified people in that dwelling reported being 65 years of age or over and who reported being 'At home' or having 'No usual address' 	
13	Plus	All persons enumerated in a private dwelling which was classified as a group household, where the dwelling had at least four bedrooms or the number of bedrooms was 'Not stated' and the dwelling had at least five 'usual residents' where, for people reporting being at home, less than 60% of those people reported a weekly income of \$600 or more and less than 60% reported a labour force status of 'employed' and less than 60% reported either attending any type of educational institution (above 'primary' level) or a labour force status of 'Employed, worked full-time' and less than 60% reported a need for assistance of 'Has a need for assistance with core activities' ^{abc}	Buildings classified in the Census as private dwellings-group households
14	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling with a landlord type of 'Real estate agent', 'State or territory housing authority', 'Person not in the same household-parent/other relative', or 'Employer-Government (includes Defence Housing Authority)'	Remove 'group houses' identified in step 13 above which have a landlord type which indicates they are rented privately, rented from a state/territory housing authority or employer sponsored housing (e.g. staff quarters), as on balance, they were not likely to be boarding houses
15	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling with a tenure type of 'Fully owned', 'Owned with a mortgage', or 'Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme'	Remove 'group houses' identified in step 13 above which have a tenure type which indicates they are on balance, most likely to be privately owned multi family households
16	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling located in a 'Caravan/residential park or camping ground', 'Marina', 'Manufactured home estate', or 'Retirement village (self-contained)'	Remove dwellings in locations such as retirement villages which are on balance were unlikely to be the site of a boarding house
17	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling that was a 'Caravan, cabin, houseboat'	Remove small dwellings such as caravans which, on balance, were unlikely to be boarding houses
18	Minus	Persons in step 13 where at least 60% of the people who reported being 'At home' in that dwelling reported either a student status of 'Full-time student', 'Part-time student', or a labour force status of 'Employed, worked full-time' ^b	Remove dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence or student households, or group houses with the majority of occupants employed full time and unlikely to house homeless people

19	Minus	Persons in step 13 where there are less than three persons enumerated in the dwelling	Remove all dwellings where there is not enough information about all the usual residents to conclude that the dwelling is likely to be a boarding house. The small numbers being enumerated and the reporting of several people away on Census night also strongly suggests family or group household rather than a rooming house
20	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling reported a voluntary work status of 'Volunteer' ^c	Remove groups of people in households, who on balance, were most likely to be housed together and who volunteer their time (for example church groups who house people who work in the community sector assisting those with disabilities and volunteer their expertise)
21	Minus	Persons in step 13 where at least 90% of people in that dwelling reported a 'stated' religious belief	Remove those households who on balance, were most likely to be in religious institutions, such as convents
22	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling reported either a usual address five years ago of 'Overseas in 2001' or 'Not stated', or was an 'Overseas visitor 2006' and at least one person in that dwelling reported either a usual address five years ago of 'Overseas in 2001' or was an 'Overseas visitor 2006'	Remove overseas visitors.
23	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling didn't state their weekly income, labour force status, type of educational institution, need for assistance, and the number of bedrooms in the dwelling	Remove dwellings where there is not enough information about the occupants to conclude that the dwelling is likely to be a boarding house
24	Minus	All persons who were already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' and 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' ^d	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting
Equals		Those who are likely to be homeless^e	

^aIn 2001 the weekly income cut off was \$400/week.

^bThe variables 'number of people employed', 'student status (full or part time)' does not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. For example a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being homeless.

^cSteps 13 and 20 could not be applied in 2001 as information about need for assistance was not collected.

^dIn 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

^eImputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

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Persons staying in other temporary lodging

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PERSONS STAYING IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING

The homeless operational group 'Persons staying in other temporary lodging includes people who reported having 'no usual address' on Census night who were enumerated in non-private dwellings which were identified by the Census Area Supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified by the building owner / manager as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast'. People staying in other temporary lodgings who have no usual address lack of the 'element' of 'security of tenure of the dwelling'. The rules then consider the income and employment status of these people to determine whether they could be considered to be homeless based on a lack of accommodation alternatives.

This group will differ from the estimates provided for this group in the Review estimates that the ABS published in **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) because a number of non-private dwelling categories were included in the preliminary estimates that are specific exclusions from the ABS statistical definition of homelessness. As outlined in the ABS definition, they are excluded because although their living conditions lack one or more of the key elements of 'home':

- they may have chosen to live in these circumstances and have accommodation alternatives; or
- are required by law to living in these circumstances; or
- are acceptable temporary living arrangements (such as student halls of residence); or
- it is essential for their broader health and wellbeing to be living in these conditions.

So they are a specific exclusion:

- people **confined** in prisons, detention centres and other institutions such as juvenile correctional facilities or hospitals;
- students living in halls of residence; and
- members of religious orders such as monks and nuns living in seminaries and nunneries and similar establishments.

For the same reasons, people in non-private dwellings which were classified as 'other welfare institutions' were not considered to be homeless and not included in this homeless operational group. Other welfare institutions include institutions providing mainly residential care for adults in need of care such as benevolent homes and drug / alcohol rehabilitation centres.

Rules for estimating Persons staying in other temporary lodging

The following table presents the rules that are applied to identify the persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in other temporary lodgings. The rule start with the persons enumerated in the non-private dwelling category of 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' who reported no usual address and is refined to remove people who were, on balance, unlikely to be homeless on Census night.

PERSONS IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		Persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast', who were not previously classified as being homeless in a boarding house, who reported having 'no usual address' on Census night and reported a weekly income of less than \$400 per week and reported a labour force status of 'Unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' ^a	Persons in dwellings which were classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' which on balance were most likely to be homeless
2	Minus	All persons who reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Students who, on balance, were unlikely to be homeless
3	Minus	All persons who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Persons who were owners / managers staff or family
4	Minus	All persons who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors
Equals		Those who are likely to be homeless^b	

^aIn 2001 the weekly income cut off was \$300/week.

^bThere is no overlap between this and any other group because the assumptions upon which it is based are mutually exclusive to the other groups.

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Persons living in severely crowded dwellings

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PERSONS LIVING IN SEVERELY CROWDED DWELLINGS

The homeless operational group 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings' is operationalised as those people who were enumerated in a private dwelling that they were usual residents of and, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS), the dwelling requires four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate them.

The concept of crowding is based upon a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex.

There is no single standard or measure for housing utilisation, however the CNOS is widely used internationally and the ABS uses it for its measures of crowding for other purposes. It is a suitable standard for use with Census data because all of the required variables for its calculation are available from the Census, although family coding limits the suitability of it in large

complex family households, and where persons may be temporarily absent on Census night.

The CNOS is sensitive to both household size and composition. The measure assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom;
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom;
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom;
- single household members 18 and over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples;
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

Households living in dwellings where this standard cannot be met are considered to be overcrowded.

To align this group with the definition of homelessness, the rules apply the 'element' that the persons lack 'control of, and access to social relations'. Lack of accommodation alternatives is assumed for people living as usual residents in a dwelling that requires four or more extra bedrooms according to CNOS. The judgement is that people who had accommodation alternatives would not remain in such severely crowded circumstances.

There may be some under estimation associated with the application of the CNOS to Census data. It is not possible to create a CNOS estimate of the number of extra bedrooms needed for households where any key piece of information is missing. This includes the number of persons per dwelling, age of the persons, the relationship in household, and in some cases, where at least one person (who is not the spouse of person 1) is temporarily absent on Census night. In addition, there may be cases where usual residents are not recorded on the Census form due to fear by the residents that they may be found to have too many residents living in the dwelling than are allowed by their lease agreement.

Treating overcrowding as homelessness at this severe level of lacking four or more extra bedrooms is designed to prevent the misclassification of people as homeless who may choose to live together under some crowding to save money, to be close to family or for other reasons etc. In addition, it also takes account of the limitation of the Census household form which only seeks relationship information within the household in relation to 'person one', as well as child relationships to 'person 2'. This limitation of Census family coding results in misclassification of family relationships, particularly for large households with complex family relationships or households which contain multiple families, or where persons are temporarily absent. Households that look like crowded group households in the Census may actually include a number of couples. Under CNOS a single adult requires their own bedroom but a couple can share a bedroom, and the masking of relationships can inflate the crowding measure.

In the ABS Survey of Income and Housing (SIH), which does not go to very remote Australia, there were no dwellings sampled which required four or more extra bedrooms in either 2005-06 or 2009-10, and only a few in each of 2003-04 and 2007-08. The Census data present over 11,000 non-Indigenous people in private dwellings requiring four or more extra bedrooms in 2006. And for people in dwellings requiring three extra bedrooms the Census estimate for non-Indigenous people in private dwellings is 20% above the SIH average for the four survey cycles quoted. Drawing the line at four or more extra bedrooms required in the Census data aligns with the concept of extreme or severe overcrowding and reasonably well with results from ABS Indigenous surveys, and avoids overestimation from Census data at lower thresholds due to family coding, persons temporarily absent and potentially errors in the numbers of bedrooms being reported.

Other Census variables are not applied to imply accommodation alternatives in severely crowded dwellings. While some of the residents may own the dwelling in which they live in severely crowded conditions, the presence of other people that contribute to crowding demonstrates loss of the power to exercise control and choice in this living situation.

Rules for estimating Persons living in severely crowded dwellings

The following table presents the rules that are applied to identify the persons who were, on balance, most likely to be homeless on Census night and live in severely crowded dwellings. The rule starts with the persons enumerated in private dwellings where the dwelling would require four or more extra bedrooms under CNOS and then refines the group by removing people who have already been considered as homeless in the other homeless groups.

PERSONS LIVING IN 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling who were usual residents in dwellings which needed 4 or more extra bedrooms under the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. ^a	
2	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households', 'Persons staying in boarding houses'. ^b	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting.
Equals		Those who are likely to be homeless	

^aSee Explanatory notes for more information.

^bIn 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not used for supported accommodation in 2001.

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Other marginal housing groups

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OTHER MARGINAL HOUSING GROUPS

The ABS will present, alongside the homeless estimates from the Census, estimates of the number of people in selected marginal housing. These are limited to categories that can be obtained from the Census. Other marginal housing, such as housing with major structural problems or where residents are in constant threat of violence, cannot be obtained from the Census and are therefore not included.

These marginal housing groups not only provide an indication of the numbers of people living in marginal housing close to the boundary of homelessness but can also provide a possible indication of people who may be at risk of homelessness.

Three marginal housing groups are classified from the Census:

- persons living in other crowded dwellings that are not severely crowded;
- persons living in other improvised dwellings - being those who were living in improvised dwellings but were not considered homeless under the rules for the group 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out'; and
- persons marginally housed in caravan parks.

Each of these groups is discussed below.

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PERSONS LIVING IN OTHER CROWDED DWELLINGS

Persons living in other crowded dwellings are those usual residents living in dwellings reported in the Census where the dwelling requires three extra bedrooms to accommodate them according to the CNOS (see Glossary and the above section for more details on 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings' on CNOS). Under the operationalisation of the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless but are considered to be in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness.

Rules for estimating Persons living in other crowded dwellings

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons living in other crowded dwellings and ensures that no person has already been counted as homeless is also counted in this marginal housing category.

PERSONS LIVING IN OTHER CROWDED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling who were usual residents in dwellings which needed 3 extra bedrooms under the Canadian National Occupancy Standard ^a	
2	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households', 'Persons staying in boarding houses' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings' ^b	These people are already counted as homeless
	Equals	Those who are likely to be marginally housed	

^aSee Explanatory notes for more information.

^bIn 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

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PERSONS IN OTHER IMPROVISED DWELLINGS

Persons in other improvised dwellings are those people who were enumerated on Census night in the dwelling category of an improvised dwelling, tent or sleepers out who reported either being 'at home' on Census night or having no usual address, and are not considered, on balance, to be homeless (see above on 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out'). Under the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless because they have accommodation alternatives, and in many living situations, the dwelling will be adequate. They are however included in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness.

Rules for estimating Persons in other improvised dwellings

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons living in other improvised dwellings and ensures that no person has already been counted as homeless or in other crowded dwellings is also counted in this marginal housing category.

PERSONS IN OTHER IMPROVISED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out who reported being 'at home' or having 'no usual address'	
2	Minus	Persons already considered to be homeless in the homeless operational group 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out'	These people are classified as homeless
3	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying in boarding houses' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings'; and the marginally housed group 'Persons living in other crowded dwellings' ²	These people are classified as homeless
4	Minus	All imputed records ³	There is little evidence that these people either exist or that they were not in the dwellings to which they were imputed (which are occupied on a semi-permanent basis) and the occupants were instead either enumerated in their principal residence or imputed at that residence
	Equals	Those who are likely to be marginally housed	

²In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

³Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

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Persons marginally housed in caravan parks

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PERSONS MARGINALLY HOUSED IN CARAVAN PARKS

Persons marginally housed in caravan parks are those considered to be in marginal housing and at risk of homelessness. However, not all persons living in caravan parks are considered to be marginally housed. For example, those living in cabins will have access to their own kitchen facilities and bathroom. However the Census data do not allow caravans and cabins to be separately identified. Others living in caravan parks on a long term basis have an element of security of tenure, and for some people they have chosen to reside in a caravan park due to convenience, cost or location and could select other accommodation alternatives.

Persons marginally housed in caravan parks are operationalised as those people who were enumerated on Census night:

- in caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan / residential park or camping ground;
- reported being at home on Census night;
- where no usual resident reported working full-time;
- the dwelling was being rented for less than \$300 per week;
- was not living in a dwelling where the landlord was reported as an employer;
- where the dwelling reported three or more bedrooms; and
- where the combined income of the persons in the dwelling was less than \$2,000.

Rules for estimating Persons marginally housed in caravan parks

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons marginally housed in caravan parks and ensures that no person has already been counted as homeless or in other crowded dwellings is also counted in this marginal housing category.

PERSONS WHO ARE marginally HOUSED IN CARAVAN PARKS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason
1		All persons enumerated in a caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan/residential park or camping ground who reported being 'at home' on Census night	
2	Minus	All persons in dwellings with a tenure type of owned outright, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent/buyscheme or occupied under a life tenure scheme	
3	Minus	All persons in a dwelling where at least one usual resident reported working full time ^a	People who it could be reasonably assumed have accommodation alternatives
4	Minus	All imputed records ^b	There is little evidence that these people even exist or that they were not in the dwellings to which they were imputed (which are occupied on a semi-permanent basis) and the occupants were instead either enumerated in their principal residence or imputed at that residence
5	Minus	All persons in a dwelling with a tenure type of being rented with reported rental payments of at least \$300/week ^c	Those people for whom the rental payments indicate they could, on balance, rent elsewhere (i.e. they have accommodation alternatives)
6	Minus	All persons in a dwelling with a landlord type of employer, includes government employer (includes Defence Housing Authority)	Persons for whom their accommodation is, on balance most likely to be related to their employment
7	Minus	All persons in dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms	People who are, on balance, most likely to be living in cabins
8	Minus	All persons in dwellings where the combined income was at least \$2000 a week ^d	People for whom their combined income indicates they could, on balance reside elsewhere (i.e. they have accommodation alternatives)
9	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings'; and the marginally housed group 'Persons living in other crowded dwellings'. ^d	These people are classified as homeless
	Equals	Those who are likely to be marginally housed in caravan parks	

^aThe variables 'number of people employed' and 'combined income' do not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. Therefore a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time or has an income doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being marginally housed.

^bImputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

^cIn 2001 the combined income cut off was \$1,594/week and the rental payment cut off was \$265/week.

^dIn 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not used for supported accommodation in 2001.

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Process for Developing a Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing

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PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section contains the following subsection :

- Process for Developing a Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing
- The review
- Consultation
- POSITION PAPER
- HOMELESS STATISTICS REFERENCE GROUP
- Purpose and Scope of the Methodology Sub-group
- Subgroup output
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PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

In 2008, following wide-spread discussion in Australia about the meaning and measurement of social inclusion and exclusion, the ABS recognised the need to develop robust and transparent homelessness statistics across a range of ABS datasets. This decision coincided with the release of the Federal Government White Paper on Homelessness (**The Road Home**), which highlighted homelessness as an important social issue in Australia and identified the need to "turn off the tap", "break the cycle" and arrest chronic homelessness (FaHCSIA, 2008a).

To this point the ABS did not provide official estimates of homelessness through the Census. Estimates were produced by academics, Professors Chamberlain and Mackenzie, who estimated the numbers of homeless people in Australia using the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population and Housing (Chamberlain, 1999; Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2003; Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2008). This estimation work was underpinned by the cultural definition of homelessness developed by Chamberlain and Mackenzie (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2008).

Following the decision to develop official ABS homelessness statistics, the ABS began developmental work in this area by first reviewing the methodology employed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie to estimate homelessness through the Census of Population and Housing. During this review the ABS identified the need to develop a robust, defensible and evidence informed definition of homelessness for statistical purposes and to produce consistent and repeatable estimates of homelessness.

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The review

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THE REVIEW

The ABS initiated a methodological review of Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzies' **Counting the Homeless** (cat. no. 2050.0) by engaging with a range of stakeholders, including researchers and the homelessness services sector, and with the advice of a Steering Committee comprising representatives from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and from three States (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) represented on the inter-jurisdictional Housing and Homelessness Information Management Group (reporting to the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee).

Following an initiating review workshop on 21 October 2009, with Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, and representatives from Homelessness Australia, as well as from Commonwealth, State/Territory and local government organisations, the nature of the ABS's issues with the Counting the Homeless 2006 methodology were outlined in **Issues in estimating the number of homeless in Australia: A paper to inform a review of Counting the Homeless methodology**. This paper was made available on the National Homelessness Information Clearinghouse website in October 2009, and submissions were sought. Submissions were received from government organisations, academics and eight homelessness services sector organisations. Workshops to progress the review, which involved Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, were held in May 2010 and October 2010.

The ABS's initial findings from the methodological review were published on 31 March 2011 in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless**, 2006 (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). That Discussion Paper announced a public submissions process and a series of advertised public forums in each capital city. That paper noted the importance of the issue of homelessness for society and governments, and the need for quality data for decision making purposes, particularly for measuring change over time. In that context, the Discussion Paper described a methodology that had been previously used, and proposed a range of methodological changes that would be needed to develop consistent, transparent and repeatable official estimates of the number of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to have been homeless on Census night.

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CONSULTATION

To maximise exposure to the review findings, the advertised public forum details were also emailed directly to many stakeholders, and the forums were held in each capital city through April and May 2011. Over 150 people attended the public forums, and many more attended sector or jurisdictional specific discussions with the ABS. The ABS was also invited to participate in discussions about the review findings in a range of meetings. There were 35 written submissions in response to the Discussion paper.

Consultation on the review findings confirmed the Discussion Paper's emphasis on the significance of the areas of likely underestimation of homelessness in relation to youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people escaping domestic and / or family violence. However, no alternative estimation methods were proposed that could address the issues of underestimation for homelessness in these groups.

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POSITION PAPER

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POSITION PAPER

As a result of the consultation, the ABS released **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002) in August 2011 that outlined:

- the key themes identified from the consultation and the submissions received;
- addressed some of the issues raised in the consultation;
- reiterated and further articulated the concerns expressed in the Discussion Paper about the underestimation of key groups of homeless people;
- noted the establishment of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group; and
- described future developments in homelessness estimation, including but not limited to a proposed quality study about homeless school students.

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HOMELESS STATISTICS REFERENCE GROUP

HOMELESS STATISTICS REFERENCE GROUP

A key outcome of the review, and the homelessness sector consultation that followed, was the establishment of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG). The HSRG was established to provide advice to the ABS about the development of homelessness statistics. A methodology sub-group of the HSRG was established to inform the ABS' work on the official estimates of homelessness from the Census. A separate sub-group will be formed to progress the measurement of homelessness in other ABS surveys and collections.

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Purpose and Scope of the Methodology Sub-group

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE METHODOLOGY SUB-GROUP

The purpose of the sub-group was to advise the HSRG and the ABS on the methodology used for estimating the prevalence of homelessness using the Censuses of Population and Housing 2001, 2006 and 2011, taking into consideration the limitations of the Census and the ABS definition of homelessness (details of the membership of the group are provided in Appendix 2). The work of the definition sub-group was framed by tight timelines linked to specified ABS release dates for ABS official estimates of homelessness from the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses of Population and Housing.

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Subgroup output

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SUBGROUP OUTPUT

Consistent with the terms of reference (provided in Appendix 3) for the Methodology sub-group, it includes advice on the development of a final methodology for use in compiling official statistics from the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses. The paper was prepared for the HSRG for endorsement at its meeting on 18 July 2012.

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The Process/Approach

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THE PROCESS/APPROACH

The Methodology subgroup first met in April 2012. To complete its work it met on six occasions including one two day face-to-face meeting and five teleconferences between April 2012 and July 2012.

The subgroup developed its thinking about the methodology by reviewing and analysing each of the individual homeless operational groups, including consideration of:

- the wording and intent of the Census questions;
- the field procedures of the Census;
- the limitations of the Census for **enumerating** some population groups; and
- the limitations of the Census for **estimating** some population groups.

At key points in this process subgroup members were invited to seek broader stakeholder feedback about the living conditions and their implications for key aspects of the methodology.

The ABS considered the input it received in members in refining the methodology for official estimates of homelessness from the Census. It undertook additional analysis to further consider the recommendations made by members. Balanced with these suggestions were how the methodology aligned with the new ABS definition of homelessness; reflected the wording and intent of the Census questions and field procedures; and to ensure that the methodology was consistent and repeatable across Censuses.

Where did the views of Definition subgroup members merge and where did they diverge?

The subgroup was in agreement in a number of areas, had divergent views in some other areas and highlighted areas for the ABS to consider to improve future Censuses.

Areas of agreement

There was large agreement within the subgroup on relevant issues, including:

- importance of having a consistent methodology across Censuses to ensure changes over time can be monitored;
- the underestimation of some key homeless groups in the Census: homeless youth, homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people fleeing domestic and/or family violence;
- the importance of using multiple sources of information to obtain a more complete picture of homelessness - Census is not the only source of data;
- to use the 2006 Census estimates of supported accommodation for the homeless rather than administrative data. Administrative data doesn't allow the data to be analysed according to the demographic variables collected in the Census or to be analysed in conjunction with the other homeless operational groups;
- moving people who were homeless and in non-private dwellings out of the boarding house category and moving them into their own category - 'Persons in temporary lodging';
- presenting other forms of marginal housing alongside homelessness estimates to present a picture of the potential at risk homeless population; and
- looking forward to the 2016 Census in order to improve the way information is collected from homeless people to improve the Census as an important data source on homelessness.

Areas of disagreement

The main areas in which the group had differing views were:

- how to best operationalise accommodation alternatives for each of the homeless operational groups using the Census dataset;
- whether all people in improvised dwellings should be considered to be homeless;
- where the line should be drawn in operationalising severe crowding; and
- whether sufficient effort had been made to address known underestimation in particular areas (eg. youth homelessness), notwithstanding limitations in the range of information collected in the Census for this purpose and a lack of robust alternative measures.

Areas highlighted to the ABS to consider in improving homeless estimation in future Censuses

There were a number of areas that members highlighted for the ABS to consider for improving the collection of homeless people in future Censuses in order to improve the estimation of homelessness, including:

- obtaining lists of legal and illegal boarding houses to improve the coding of the boarding house category;
- expanding procedures for identifying supported accommodation for the homeless to allow the collection of those on 'voucher' or 'brokerage';
- to work further with HSRG to identify ways to improve both the enumeration and estimation of homeless youth, homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people fleeing domestic and/or family violence; and
- supportive of the ABS seeking funding to run a separate homeless youth school survey (if the quality study proves successful) to allow estimation of youth homelessness.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This section contains the following subsection :
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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

On 11 September 2012 the ABS will publish its official homelessness estimates from both the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, consistent with the methodology outlined in this publication. They will be published in the publication **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0). Official estimates of homelessness from the 2011 Census, using the same methodology, will be published on 12 November 2012 under the same catalogue number, after Census second release variables are published on 30 October 2012.

This ABS methodology will be applied in producing homelessness estimates from future Censuses. However, improvements are expected to be made to both questions and field procedures which will provide for new and better estimates for tracking future changes in homelessness. The transparency and repeatability in the methodology will allow for an alternate estimate to be made that is consistent with 2011 to provide a link in monitoring changes over time.

The Census is not the only source of data from which the ABS publishes estimates of homelessness and the ABS has developed a statistical program on homelessness for the next few years. Some of these developments are outlined below.

The ABS will publish an **Information Paper: Guide to Homelessness Statistics** (cat. no. 4923.0) in November 2012 to assist users with analysing not just estimates compiled from the Census but also from other available data sources to obtain a more complete picture of homelessness. The guide will outline which parts of the homeless definition ABS collections can, or cannot capture.

Census

ABS will investigate using its 5% sample of the Australian population captured in its Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been classified as likely to be homeless on Census night. The circumstances of people classified as likely to be homeless in 2011 can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and vice versa to look at both antecedents for and situations after an episode of homelessness. Into the future it should be possible to report on aspects of repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD, compared with the rest of the population. Further information on the SLCD can be found in **Census Data Enhancement Project: An Update, Oct 2010** (cat. no. 2062.0).

Some options for improving both enumeration and estimation in future Censuses have been discussed in the **ABS Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, 2011** (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b).

Another aspect of potential future improvement in homelessness estimation from the Census will be the possible inclusion of new content around, for example, health status, so that the homeless population can be compared with the rest of the population. A longitudinal view through Censuses may therefore be able to be studied in terms of both the pathways into homelessness arising from social factors, and its consequences for other outcomes in later life.

The ABS anticipates opening the public consultation to seek input into the priorities for Census topics and procedures for Census 2016 in early November 2012, after the second data release for the 2011 Census. An information paper with more details about the submission process will be available at that time from <www.abs.gov.au/census>.

For the next Census, ABS will be considering user needs across the full range of topics, including homelessness. The ABS is still setting bounds for the scope, timing and capacity for changes to Census 2016, and has already flagged that strategies for reaching remote or hard-to-get groups will need further improvement. The public consultation process is expected to close in the first part of 2013.

ABS Household Surveys

ABS has so far included a module on past periods of homelessness in two surveys, from which a picture of the incidence of homeless can be derived, as well as trends in the homelessness over time, at least for those who have transitioned out of homelessness at the time of interview. The homelessness module has been run in the 2010 General Social Survey and is being run in the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The module will be improved for use in the 2014 General Social Survey and, once adjusted for cultural appropriateness, will be considered for the next National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. The ABS has also collected information in the 2012 Personal Safety Survey about where people go when they leave a violent partner, and future developments may expand this information set for later cycles of the survey.

The GSS provided information on people who have been homeless in the past but who are now usual residents of private dwellings. The module also provides information about how long ago the person had been homeless, the number of times they have been without a permanent place to live, whether they sought assistance from services and whether the services were useful.

In March 2012, the ABS released an article entitled **Life after homelessness** in the publication **Australian Social Trends** (cat. no. 4102.0). This article drawing on the GSS results. The article examines a range of socio-economic indicators of those who had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the 10 years prior to the survey, but were no longer homeless.

The development for the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) will shortly commence. The past experiences of homelessness module will again be included in the 2014 GSS, and again oversampling is expected to occur in lower socio economic areas (using SEIFA). As the GSS 2010 only enumerated usual residents of private dwellings, the past experiences of homelessness module did not include: people currently living in shelters; people sleeping rough; people 'couch surfing' (staying temporarily with other households); nor people staying in boarding houses. It may have included some people staying in Transitional Housing Management (THM) properties, if the adult staying there at the time of the survey considered that it was their usual residence at that time.

The ABS will convene a sub-group from its HSRG to provide advice to the ABS in the development/improvement of these modules.

Key population groups

Youth

Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS is undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the correct identification of homeless youth in the Census but recognise the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of youth homelessness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

The ABS definition of homelessness has been developed for application to the general population in Australia. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the measures of homelessness developed with that definition, there are likely to be additional aspects to homelessness from an Indigenous perspective that the definition does not currently acknowledge or take account of.

The ABS will shortly commence further work and consultation on homelessness concepts and measurement in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This work may have impacts on how homelessness for Indigenous Australians are estimated.

The ABS is also considering development of a culturally appropriate module on previous experiences of homelessness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander surveys so that this data can be used to understand Indigenous homelessness and allow comparison with the data collected for the general population from the General Social Survey.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the identification of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Census but recognise the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

People fleeing domestic and/or family violence

As outlined above (Personal Safety Survey), in late 2013 the ABS will have data from the Personal Safety Survey on people who left a violent current or previous partner and whether they 'couch surfed', sleep rough, stayed in a shelter etc. This will provide will provide an indication of what accommodation was used by people the last time they separated from their violent

partner/s and will be an important new source of information about homelessness and domestic violence.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the enumeration of, and the identification as homeless of those who were fleeing domestic and/or family violence in the Census. However the ABS recognises the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

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Explanatory Notes

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Glossary

GLOSSARY

Age

Refers to a person's age at last birthday. These data are collected for each person. Age is calculated from date of birth, however if this is not provided, stated age is used. If neither is provided age is imputed.

Australia

Australia is defined in the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries** (SACC). It includes the states and territories and the other territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay Territory, but excludes Norfolk Island and the other Australian external territories of Australian Antarctic Territory, Heard and McDonald Islands, Ashmore and Cartier Islands and Coral Sea Territory. Prior to 1996, Census tabulations excluded Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands from the Australian total but the counts were available separately.

Australian born

Australian born includes all people born in Australia and excludes people

- born at sea
- whose response was classified 'Inadequately described, or
- whose response was classified 'Not elsewhere classified'.

Australian Citizenship

Refers to people who state they have Australian Citizenship.

Australian Census Analytic Program (ACAP)

This program provides researchers with access to unpublished Census data. The objectives of this program were to publish important, and previously unrevealed information incorporating 2006 Census and other data by:

- assisting and encouraging issue-driven research; and
- increasing the use of Census data.

ACAP provides Australian researchers with an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of Australia by advancing contemporary understanding of Australia's social, cultural and economic environment.

Australian Standard Geographical Classification

The **Australian Standard Geographical Classification** (ASGC) was developed by the ABS for the collection and dissemination of geographic statistics. It is a hierarchically structured classification with a number of spatial units to satisfy different statistical purposes.

The ASGC areas used for the Census are

- Mesh Block (MB)
- Collection District (CD)
- Statistical Local Area (SLA)
- Local Government Area (LGA)
- Remoteness Area (RA)
- Statistical Subdivision (SSD)
- Statistical Division (SD)
- Statistical District (S Dist)
- Statistical Region (SR)
- Major Statistical Region (MSR)
- Urban Centre/Locality (UC/L)
- Section of State (SOS)
- State/Territory.

See also:

Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006 (cat. no. 1216.0)

Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas, Australia (cat. no. 2905.0)

Statistical Geography Volume 3: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Urban Centres/Localities (cat. no. 2909.0)

Average

See Mean.

Birthplace

See Country of birth.

Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS)

The Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness is sensitive to both household size and composition. The measure assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom, and
- single household members 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples.

Households living in dwellings where this standard cannot be met are considered to be overcrowded.

Caravans, cabins, houseboats, etc.

Enumeration of people in caravans, houseboats, cabins etc. varies depending on their situation. Occupied caravans are usually treated as private dwellings with the exception of some caravans on residential allotments (see below).

Caravans on Residential Allotments: An occupied caravan on a residential allotment is usually treated as an occupied private dwelling. The exception to this is where there are one or more other structures on the allotment and the occupants of the caravan live and eat with the occupants of the main dwelling. In this case the occupants are all classed as one household and the caravan is counted as an additional room of the main dwelling.

Caravans on Roadsides/Open Land: Prior to the 2006 Census, occupied caravans at roadside parking areas or on open land were classified as sleepers-out. The occupants of the caravans complete Household forms. For the 2006 Census, caravans on roadsides/open land are treated the same as caravans in caravan parks. That is, they are treated as occupied private dwellings and families are identified and coded.

Caravans or Cabins in Caravan Parks: Since the 1986 Census, occupied caravans or cabins in caravan parks have been treated as occupied private dwellings, i.e. families are identified and coded. Prior to this, they were treated as non-private dwellings.

Houseboats: Occupied houseboats are treated as occupied private dwellings regardless of location. Prior to the 1986 Census, occupied craft in marinas were treated as non-private dwellings.

Managers' residences in caravan parks or marinas are enumerated and classified as separate private dwellings. Unoccupied caravans and boats/craft, regardless of location, are not counted in the Census.

Census

The Australian Census of Population and Housing is an official count of population and dwellings, and collects details of age, sex, and other characteristics of that population. For more information see **How Australia Takes a Census** (cat. no. 2903.0) and the information paper **2006 Census of Population and Housing, Nature and Content** (cat. no. 2008.0). These papers are also available on the ABS web site <<https://www.abs.gov.au>>.

Census counts

The Census counts people where they were located on Census Night and this count of the population is referred to as the place of enumeration count. A count of the population based on their place of usual residence is also available. While every effort is made to achieve a complete Census count, some under enumeration inevitably occurs for various reasons, for example, the inadvertent omission of very young children, treatment of some dwellings as unoccupied when in fact they are occupied, and failure to find all dwellings. Refusal by householders to complete the Census form is not a significant cause of under enumeration.

Child

This is a person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, foster or nominal son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children less than 15 years of age and unrelated children less than 15 years of age. In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household. A separate family in the household is formed in

this instance. If a person is aged under 15 and has a partner and/or a spouse these relationships are not recorded.

Child under 15

This is a person who has been classified as a child of another household member and who is aged under 15 years. A person who is classified as a child under 15 is considered to be a dependent child.

Collection District

The Census Collection District (CD) is the second smallest geographic area defined in the **Australian Standard Geographical Classification** (ASGC). For the 2006 Census, CDs serve as the basic building block in the ASGC and are used for the aggregation of statistics to larger Census geographic areas, including Statistical Local Area (SLA).

For the 2006 Census, there is an average of about 225 dwellings in each CD. In rural areas, the number of dwellings per CD generally declines as population densities decrease. CDs are defined for each Census and are current only at Census time. For the 2006 Census, there are about 38,200 CDs throughout Australia (this includes the other territories of Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay). For more information see **Census Dictionary, 2006** (cat. no. 2901.0).

Core activity need for assistance

Measure introduced in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing to determine the number of people with a profound or severe disability. For the Census, people with a profound or severe disability are defined as those people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age.

Counting unit

The basic counting unit for homelessness estimation is the person. This counting unit provides for the richness of their personal characteristics (including relationships with others) for analysis as well and by their living situation.

Country of birth

The Census records a person's country of birth. For the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries** (SACC) is used to classify responses for country of birth of person. This classification uses the current names of countries, so if a person uses a former name, the current name is coded. For example, Siam would be coded to Thailand.

Couple family

A couple family is identified by the existence of a couple relationship. A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage. A couple family can be with or without children, and may or may not include other related individuals.

Data quality

Each stage of the Census is subject to stringent quality assurance procedures which result in data of high quality. However, in a Census there are recognised sources of error and some of these may survive in the data produced. Potential sources of error in the Census are: under enumeration, respondent error, processing error and introduced random error. Introduced random error is used to protect the confidentiality of individuals. The effect of such errors on overall Census results is generally insignificant and does not impair the usefulness of Census data.

Domestic violence

Violence by any member of the person's household (eg partners, parents, siblings, children, housemates, & other household members).

Dwelling

In general terms, a dwelling is a structure which is intended to have people live in it, and which is habitable on Census Night. Some examples of dwellings are houses, motels, flats, caravans, prisons, tents, humpies and houseboats. Private dwellings are enumerated using household forms, which obtain family and relationship data.

Non-private dwellings (hotels, hospitals etc.) are enumerated on individual personal forms.

All occupied dwellings are counted in the Census. Unoccupied private dwellings are also counted with the exception of unoccupied dwellings in caravan parks, marinas and manufactured home estates. Unoccupied residences of owners, managers or caretakers of such establishments are counted. And for the 2006 Census, unoccupied units in retirement villages (self-contained) are also counted.

Dwelling Location

Dwelling Location applies to private dwellings, and describes the location of dwellings other than 'typical' private dwellings.

The majority of private dwellings will appear in the 'Other' category.

Dwelling Structure

Dwelling structure classifies the structure of private dwellings enumerated in the Census. The information is determined by the Census collector.

The broad categories are

Separate house: This is a house which stands alone in its own grounds separated from other dwellings by at least half a metre. A separate house may have a flat attached to it, such as a granny flat or converted garage (the flat is categorised under Flat, unit or apartment - see below). The number of storeys of separate houses is not recorded

Also included in this category are occupied accommodation units in manufactured home estates which are identified as separate houses.

Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc: These dwellings have their own private grounds and no other dwelling above or below them.

Flat, unit or apartment: This category includes all dwellings in blocks of flats, units or apartments. These dwellings do not have their own private grounds and usually share a common entrance foyer or stairwell. This category also includes flats attached to houses such as granny flats, and houses converted into two or more flats.

Caravan, cabin, houseboat: This category includes all occupied caravans, cabins and houseboats regardless of location. It also includes occupied campervans, mobile houses and small boats. Separate houses in caravan/residential parks or marinas occupied by managers are not included in this category.

Improvised home, tent, sleepers-out: This category includes sheds, tents, humpies and other improvised dwellings, occupied on Census Night. It also includes people sleeping on park benches or in other 'rough' accommodation.

House or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.: A house or flat attached to a shop, office, factory or any other non-residential structure is included in this category.

Dwelling Type

Dwelling type classifies all dwellings into the basic dwelling types. The categories are:

Occupied Private Dwelling: An occupied private dwelling is a private dwelling occupied by one or more people. A private dwelling is normally a house, flat, or even a room. It can also be a caravan, houseboat, tent, or a house attached to an office, or rooms above a shop.

Occupied dwellings in caravan/residential parks are treated as occupied private dwellings.

Occupied dwellings in manufactured home estates and units in retirement villages (self-contained) were classified as occupied private dwellings since the 1996 Census.

Unoccupied Private Dwellings: These are structures built specifically for living purposes which are habitable, but unoccupied on Census Night. Vacant houses, holiday homes, huts and cabins (other than seasonal workers' quarters) are counted as unoccupied dwellings. Also included are newly completed dwellings not yet occupied, dwellings which are vacant because they are due for demolition or repair, and dwellings to let.

Unoccupied private dwellings in caravan/residential parks, marinas and manufactured home estates are not counted in the Census. The exception to the above are residences of owners, managers or caretakers of the establishment and for the 2006 Census, unoccupied residences in retirement villages (self-contained).

Non-Private Dwellings (NPDs): NPDs are those dwellings, not included above, that provide a communal or transitory type of accommodation.

NPDs include hotels, motels, guest houses, prisons, religious and charitable institutions, boarding schools, defence establishments, hospitals and other communal dwellings.

People in NPDs are enumerated on personal forms and so information on their family structure is not available. In the case of accommodation for the retired or aged, where the one establishment contains both self-contained units and units that are not self-contained, then both household forms (self-contained) and personal forms (not self-contained) are used as appropriate.

Migratory: People enumerated on an overnight journey by plane, train or bus cannot be allocated a dwelling type. This category exists for processing purposes only.

Off-Shore: This includes dwellings such as off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like. Prior to the 2006 Census, it also included people enumerated aboard ships in Australian waters.

Shipping: This dwelling type is for people enumerated aboard ships in Australian waters. For the 2001 and earlier Censuses, they were included in the 'Offshore' category.

Education

See Level of Highest Educational Attainment.

Educational qualification

Every Census since 1911 has included a question in which respondents reported their highest level of educational achievement. In the 1966 Census, respondents were asked to provide details of the qualification title and the institution at which it was obtained. In all Censuses since 1966, people aged 15 years and over have been asked whether they had obtained a qualification and, if so, the qualification name and field of study. The 1971 Census also asked whether the person

was currently studying for a qualification and, if so, its name. Prior to 2001, this information was restricted to post-school educational qualifications. From 2001, the information includes all qualifications (both school and post-school) and the level and field of the highest qualification.

Qualifications data are used to assess the skill level of the labour force, and potential labour force, and are valuable for the planning and implementation of labour force training programs.

Employed

See Labour force status.

Enumeration

See Place of enumeration, Place of usual residence.

Estimated Resident population of Australia

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official measure of the Australian population, and is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. The ERP includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months and excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.

European typology of homelessness (ETHOS)

The European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) currently defines homelessness as being without a 'home'. Having a 'home' can be understood as: having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain) and having a legal title to occupation (legal domain).

ETHOS classifies homelessness people into four broad conceptual categories:

- **rooflessness:** without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough
- **houselessness:** with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter
- **living in insecure housing:** threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence
- **living in inadequate housing:** in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding

Family

A family is defined by the ABS as two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household.

Each separately identified couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship forms the basis of a family. Some households contain more than one family.

Visiting families are not included as part of the household, and the relationships of other visitors are not coded. A household containing only a visiting family (e.g. a family at a holiday home) is coded to a household type of visitors only.

Where all persons present are aged under 15 years, or where information for each person has been imputed, the household is deemed not classifiable to a family. Of people listed as temporarily absent, only spouse(s) and family children are used in coding family composition.

Family Type

Families are classified in terms of the relationships that exist between a single family reference person and each other member of that family. The Family Type variable distinguishes between different types of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of preference. Family type is derived from people enumerated in the household who usually reside there, and who share a familial relationship. Partners and dependent children usually present but temporarily absent are also included in this derivation.

Note: There is no provision for 'other related individuals' in second and third families. If more than three families are found in a household, only three families are separately classified and any other people are classified as either related family members or non-family members as appropriate.

See also Family.

Family violence

Violence against a person by any family member (eg sibling, resident and non-resident family members).

Flow measures of homelessness

Flow measure is an estimate of the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period

of time, for example, over a 12 month period.

See Incidence measures of homelessness.

Full/Part-Time Student status

The Census records the full/part-time status of students.

General Social Survey (GSS)

The General Social Survey aims to collect data for persons aged 18 years and over on a range of social dimensions from the same individual to enable analysis of the interrelationships in social circumstances and outcomes, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage experienced in Australia.

Grey Nomads

Grey nomads are defined as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night, and reported having no usual address. The majority of these grey nomads were enumerated in holiday destinations including the northern beaches in NSW, and in Queensland, NT and northern WA.

Group household

The ABS defines a group household as a household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years and over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

An unrelated child (e.g. boarder) under the age of 15 who lives in a household with one or more usual residents, is coded as forming a parent-child relationship within that household. These households become family households, not group households.

Highest Year of School Completed

The Census records the highest level of primary or secondary school a person has completed. Highest year of school completed is classified to the **Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)**.

This classification has changed since the 2001 Census. In 2001 it included a category 'Still at school'. The 'Still at school' category is excluded from the 2006 classification. This allows the level of highest educational attainment to be determined for people still at school.

Homelessness

In accordance with the ABS statistical definition, when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

See Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0).

Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG)

Advisory group to the ABS on the development, collection, compilation, production and dissemination of robust statistics for the use in analysing, understanding and reporting on homelessness in Australia.

Hours Worked

The Census records the number of hours worked in all jobs held during the week before Census Night, by employed people aged 15 years and over. This excludes any time off but includes any overtime or extra time worked. Hours worked, when used in combination with Labour Force Status, provides information on full-time and part-time employment. For Census purposes, a person is considered to be working full-time if they worked 35 hours or more in all jobs during the week prior to Census Night.

Houseboat

Occupied houseboats have been classified as occupied private dwellings since the 1986 Census, and therefore receive household forms. Unoccupied houseboats are not counted.

Household

A household is defined as one or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling. Under this definition, all occupants of a dwelling form a household and complete one form. Therefore,

for Census purposes, the total number of households is equal to the total number of occupied private dwellings as a Census form is completed for each household from which dwelling information for the household is obtained.

Household Composition

The Census records the type of household within a dwelling. Household composition indicates whether a family is present or not and whether or not other unrelated household members are present.

A maximum of three families can be coded to a household. Lone person households can contain visitors. Visitor only households can contain overseas visitors.

Household form

The household form is the primary means for collecting Census data and is used in all private dwellings. A personal form records person characteristics in cases where a household form is not appropriate. If there are more than six people in a household on Census Night, a personal form is completed for the seventh person, and any subsequent persons.

Household Income

This variable is the sum of the individual incomes of each resident present in the household on Census Night. If any resident aged 15 years and over is temporarily absent, or does not state their income, then household income is not derived for that household.

In most cases, the income of visitors to a household is excluded from the calculation of household income. The exception to this is households that comprise only visitors. Household income is calculated for these households in order to collect data on household income in tourist areas.

The 2006 Census collected individual income in ranges, so before these could be summed to a household level a specific dollar amount needed to be imputed for each person. Median incomes for each range, derived using data from the 2003-04 Survey of Income and Housing, were used for the purpose of compiling household income measures.

This method, which imputes personal income values within reported individual income ranges, was selected as the best practical approximation that would result in the majority of households being included in the same Census household income range that would have been derived had individuals reported their incomes in dollar amounts rather than in ranges. The approximations are expected to generally support analyses looking at various other characteristics of both persons and households in terms of broad household income ranges.

The imputation used in deriving household income is likely to understate some household incomes, specifically lower household incomes in general but particularly for single income households. Single income households with lower income levels are most affected by the imputation methodology understating their incomes. For example, for single parent family households with the parent under 45 years of age, analysis shows that nearly twice as many such households were likely to be allocated to the low income range of \$250 to \$349 per week than would have been the case had incomes been reported in dollar amounts (with fewer than expected households in higher income ranges). Similarly for sole person households where the resident is aged 65 years and over, analysis shows the number of households that were likely to be allocated to the low income range of \$250 to \$349 per week was about 15% higher than would have been the case had incomes been reported in dollar amounts.

A more general issue with individual income reporting in the Census is that studies have shown individuals tend to understate their incomes compared with the amounts that would be reported in surveys designed specifically to measure income.

For the above reasons, care should be exercised in any use of Census household income information, which relies on the imputed values. Similar care should be taken when using 2001 Census data.

Household Type

See Household Composition.

Hours worked in all jobs last week

Records the number of hours worked in all jobs held during the week before Census Night, by employed people aged 15 years and over. This excludes any time off but includes any overtime or extra time worked.

Housing Loan Repayments (monthly)

Housing loan repayments are those which are being paid by a household to purchase the dwelling in which it was enumerated (also applicable to caravans). The Census collects this information in single dollars up to \$9,999. However, for practical purposes this information is recoded to a specific number of ranges.

Improvised dwelling

See Dwelling, Dwelling Structure.

Imputation

Imputation is a statistical process for predicting values where no response was provided to a question and a response could not be derived.

Where no Census form is returned, the number of males and females in 'non-contact' private dwellings may be imputed. In addition, the following key demographic variables may also be imputed, if they are 'Not stated':

- Age
- Place of Usual Residence
- Registered Marital Status.

The imputation method used for the 2006 Census is known as 'hotdecking'. In general this method involves locating a donor record and copying the relevant responses to the record requiring imputation. The donor record will have similar characteristics and must also have the required variable(s) stated. In addition the donor record will be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed. The match must occur within the same Capital City or Balance of State. When a suitable match is found, then the copying of the response(s) from the donor record to the variable(s) that have missing values can occur.

The methodology for imputation is tailored to two situations. Firstly, where no Census form has been returned and secondly where a partially completed form was returned.

No Census form returned - private dwelling: Where a Census collector has identified that a private dwelling was occupied on Census Night but a Census form was not returned, the number of males and females normally in the dwelling and their key demographic variables may require imputation. In these cases, the non-demographic variables are set to 'Not stated' or 'Not applicable'.

The 'No Census form returned' scenario has two variations. Firstly, where no form was returned but the collector was able to ascertain the number of males and females from a resident of the dwelling, or in a small number of cases a building manager or neighbour. And secondly, where no form was returned and the number of males and females remains unknown.

For records where the number of males and females is unknown, two imputation processes are required. Initially these records must have their number of males and females imputed using hotdecking. Then a second imputation (also using hotdecking) is run to impute the key demographic variables.

To hotdeck the number of males and females, the donor records must meet several conditions:

- They must be records where no Census form was returned but where the number of males and females was ascertained by the collector;
- They must have a similar Dwelling Structure to the record to be imputed;
- They must be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed.

The number of males and females are the only data copied from the donor record in the first hotdecking process.

In the next process, the records which have just had their number of males and females imputed, are subjected to the same hotdecking process as those records where the number of males and females had been ascertained.

This hotdecking process imputes the key demographic variables. Again the donor records must meet several conditions:

- They must be records where everyone within the dwelling provided all their demographic characteristics;
- They must have similar Dwelling Structure and Dwelling Location;
- They must have identical counts of males and females;
- They must be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed.

The key demographic variables are then copied from the donor records to the records requiring imputation.

The method of imputing the counts of males and females in previous Censuses was to use the average number of males and females in responding private dwellings for that Collection District. This method was discovered to have over-imputed the 2001 Census male and female counts.

No Census form returned - non private dwelling: Where a person in a non-private dwelling did not return a form, their demographic characteristics are copied from another person in a similar non-private dwelling using Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Census form returned: Where a form was returned, some or all of the demographic characteristics may require imputation. If Registered Marital Status and/or Place of Usual Residence are 'Not stated' they are imputed using hotdecking, whereas Age is imputed based on distributions obtained from previous Censuses. Registered Marital Status imputation is carried out by finding a similar person in a similar responding dwelling based on the variables:

- Sex
- Relationship in Private Dwelling

- Age
- Dwelling Type
- Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Registered Marital Status is only imputed for persons aged 15 years and over, and set to 'Not applicable' for persons aged under 15 years.

Where a complete usual address on Census Night is not provided, the information that is provided is used to impute an appropriate CD (and SLA). A similar person in a similar dwelling is located and missing usual residence fields are copied to the imputed variable.

These are based on the variables:

- Residential Status in a Non-Private Dwelling
- Dwelling Location
- Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Where date of birth or age details are incomplete or missing, the variable Age is imputed based on distributions for particular populations (for example, male or female; marital status and state/territory of usual residence). Factors affecting age imputation include any reported labour force activity, educational institution attending and other family member relationships and ages.

Incidence measures of homelessness

Estimates the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period of time, for example, over a 12 month period (also known as flow measures). They may include multiple incidences of homelessness for some individuals.

Income

Each Census respondent aged 15 years and over is asked to indicate the range within which their gross income from all sources lies (rather than their exact income).

Gross income includes wages, salaries, overtime, business or farm income (less operating expenses), rents received, dividends, interest, superannuation, maintenance (child support), workers' compensation, and government pensions and allowances (including all payments for family assistance, labour market assistance, youth and student support, and support for the aged, carers and people with a disability).

As income from most sources is reported before deduction of expenses incurred in the earning of the income, these incomes are always a positive figure. However, income from some sources may be negative. Income from own unincorporated enterprise and income from rental property are collected net of expenses incurred in the raising of income, so may be negative. This may result in a negative total income.

While there is a tendency for incomes to be slightly understated in the Census, the distribution is largely consistent with that obtained from the ABS income surveys. Therefore, Census income data is useful as an indicator of relative advantage or disadvantage and economic well being.

Testing of the topic has shown that there is a general tendency for those not in the labour force to leave this question unanswered, as they consider income only applies to payments received as a result of employment. Similarly, pensioners and self funded retirees sometimes state that they receive no income as they do not regard their pension as income.

Indigenous personal form

See Interviewer household form.

Indigenous special enumeration strategy

The ABS has implemented procedures tailored to the enumeration of Indigenous people living in discrete communities since the 1976 Census.

Central to the 2006 strategy was the role undertaken by the State Indigenous Manager (SIM). The SIM laid the groundwork for a successful enumeration by working with Indigenous groups and media to encourage participation. The SIM also coordinated the enumeration activities which affected Indigenous peoples.

The SIM in each state and territory was supported by the Indigenous Engagement Manager (IEM). IEMs are ongoing ABS staff members employed to implement the ABS' Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy, and have responsibility for liaising with Indigenous communities and organisations and advising the ABS on enumeration issues relating to Indigenous people. IEMs also facilitate the return of ABS data to Indigenous communities and organisations in a culturally appropriate manner. In some states the IEM will take on the role of the SIM.

As in the past, Census Field Officers are employed to work with Indigenous communities to ensure they are counted in the Census. This includes gaining community acceptance for the Census and the recruitment of local field staff.

In certain Indigenous communities, an interview form designed to be appropriate to Indigenous culture is used. This part of the strategy is used in discrete communities where communities indicate the need due to the cultural or language situation. In these cases Census Field Officers recruit, train and work with people from the community so that they can manage the enumeration and conduct the interviews.

In other areas, Indigenous peoples are enumerated using standard procedures and forms. Special collectors skilled in Indigenous languages and culture are available to assist in these areas if required.

Indigenous Status

The question about Indigenous origins on the Census form asks whether each person is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Torres Strait Islanders are the descendants of the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait, between the tip of Cape York and Papua New Guinea.

Individual Income

Individual incomes are collected as ranges in the Census. To enable these range values to be summed, information from the Survey of Income and Housing, which collects income as individual values, is used to estimate the median income within each bracket collected by the Census. The relevant median value for each family/household member is then summed to produce family or household income.

Industry of employment

Industry of employment describes the industries in which employed people aged 15 years and over work. The **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification** (ANZSIC) is used in classifying the responses given to the industry questions for the 2006 Census.

Interviewer household form

The interviewer household form is used in nominated discrete Indigenous communities (communities of Indigenous people in which language differences or other factors make use of the standard self-enumeration forms impractical). The interviewer household form is an interview based Census form which is used to record the details of up to 12 persons in a household, and some dwelling data. If there are more than 12 persons in a dwelling a second interviewer household form is used to record the details of subsequent persons.

Introduced random error

Under the **Census and Statistics Act 1905** it is an offence to release any information collected under the Act that is likely to enable identification of any particular individual or organisation. Introduced random error is used to ensure that no data are released which could risk the identification of individuals in the statistics.

Care has been taken in the tables which are presented to minimise the risk of identifying individuals. In addition, a technique has been applied to randomly adjust cell values. Random adjustment of the data is considered to be the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable Census data. The technique has been applied and all cells are slightly adjusted to prevent any identifiable data being exposed. These adjustments result in small introduced random errors. However the information value of the table as a whole is not impaired.

It is not possible to determine which individual figures have been affected by random error adjustments, but the small variance which may be associated with derived totals can, for the most part, be ignored.

Labour force

For Census purposes, the labour force includes people aged 15 years and over who work for payment or profit, or as an unpaid helper in a family business, during the week prior to Census Night; have a job from which they are on leave or otherwise temporarily absent; are on strike or stood down temporarily; or do not have a job but are actively looking for work and available to start work.

Persons classified as being in the labour force as those employed (i.e. the first three groups above); and unemployed people (i.e. the last group above).

People aged 15 years and over who are neither employed nor unemployed are classified as not in the labour force. This includes people who are retired, pensioners and people engaged solely in home duties.

Labour force status

In the Census the Labour force status variable is derived for all people aged 15 years and over. It classifies people as employed working full-time, part-time or away from work, unemployed looking for full-time work, looking for part-time work, or not in the labour force. The category 'Employed, away from work' also includes persons who stated they worked but who did not state the number of hours worked.

Landlord Type

The Census provides information on the type of landlord for rented dwellings. It applies to all households who are renting the dwelling (including caravans, etc. in caravan parks) in which they are enumerated on Census Night.

Level of Highest Educational Attainment

Records the highest educational achievement a person aged 15 years and over has attained. It lists qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular field of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken.

Location of dwelling

See Dwelling location.

Lone parent

A lone parent is a person who has no spouse or partner usually resident in the household, but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household. The child may be either dependent or non-dependent.

Lone person household

Any private dwelling in which there is only one usual resident at least 15 years of age, is classified as being a lone person household.

Marina

See Caravans, cabins, houseboats, cabins etc.

Mean

The mean is calculated by summing the values of all observations in a set of data and then dividing by the number of observations in the set. Thus: mean = sum of all the observed values / number of observations.

Median

The median is the value that divides a set of data exactly in half. It is the middle value when the values in a set of data are arranged in order. If there is no middle value (i.e. there are an even number of values) then the median is calculated by determining the mean of the two middle values. Thus: median = the middle value of a set of data.

New migrants

A person who has arrived in Australia in the Census year who has been in the country no more than 7 months (ie in the Census year).

Non-dependent child

A person aged 15 years or more, who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the same household, who is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household.

Non-private dwelling

See Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Non-school Qualification: Level of education

Level of education is defined as the field of study of the highest completed non-school qualification.

Not in the labour force

Persons not in the labour force are those persons who, during the week prior to Census Night, were neither employed nor unemployed. They include persons who were keeping house (unpaid), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, in gaol, trainee teachers, members of contemplative religious orders, and persons whose only activity during the week prior to Census Night was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organisation.

Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwelling

Measures the number of bedrooms in each occupied private dwelling, including caravans in caravan parks.

Occupation

Occupation is collected in the Census for all employed people aged 15 years and over. Two questions are used in the Census: 'In the main job held last week, what was the person's occupation - Give full title', and 'What are the main tasks that the person usually performs in the occupation...'

Collecting both occupation title and task information ensures more accurate coding of occupations. The 2006 Census uses the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations** (ANZSCO). For more information see **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations** (cat. no. 1220.0). The **Australian Standard Classification of Occupations** (ASCO) Second Edition was used in the 2001 Census.

Occupied private dwelling

See Dwelling.

Older persons travelling on Census night

Includes persons in dwellings where all persons in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in a caravan, cabin or houseboat, who reported having a usual address elsewhere on Census night.

Overcrowding

Households living in dwellings requiring extra bedrooms according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

See Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS)

Over estimation

In the context of estimating homelessness over estimation occurs when persons who are represented in the underlying data set are misclassified as homeless when they are not.

See also Under-enumeration, Underestimation.

Overseas visitor

See Visitors to Australia

Partner

A person identified as being in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household is a partner. The couple relationship is established through reporting of either a registered or de facto marriage, and includes same-sex couples.

Partner violence

Any incident of sexual assault, threatened sexual assault, physical assault or threatened or attempted physical assault by a current and/or previous partner.

Personal form

The Census personal form records details for one person only. It contains the same questions as the household form, but excludes the household questions. The personal form is used

- for households with more than six people: the household form accommodates six people, so one personal form is completed for each extra person,
- for privacy: if any person in a household prefers, for privacy reasons, not to be recorded on the household form, then a personal form and a privacy envelope are issued for that person, and
- in non-private dwellings: one personal form is completed for each person in a non-private dwelling on Census Night.

Personal Safety Survey (PSS)

The Personal Safety Survey aims to collect information about men's and women's experience of physical or sexual assault or threat by male and female perpetrators. Experiences of the different types of violence, since the age of 15, by different types of male and female perpetrators (including current partner, previous partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or date, other known man or women, and stranger) is explored. More detailed information, such as where the incident occurred and what action was taken, can be obtained for most recent incidents of each of the different types of violence by a male and female perpetrator. Additional information is also collected about respondents experience of current and previous partner violence such as frequency and fears of violence, incidents of stalking and other forms of harassment and general feelings of safety.

Place of birth

See Country of birth.

Place of enumeration

The place of enumeration is the place at which the person is counted i.e. where he/she spent Census Night, which may not be where he/she usually lives.

Place of usual residence

This is the place where a person usually lives. It may, or may not be the place where the person was counted on Census Night.

Place of usual residence five years ago

Place of usual residence five years ago identifies a person's place of usual residence five years before the Census.

Population

Census count of persons based on their reported place of usual residence.

Post enumeration survey (PES)

A measure of the undercount in the Census is obtained from a sample survey of households undertaken shortly after the Census, called the Post Enumeration Survey. It collects information about where people were on Census Night and their characteristics, which are compared to the actual Census forms. The Post Enumeration Survey found an undercount of 1.8% in the 2001 Census, 2.7% in the 2006 Census and 1.7% in the 2011 Census.

The PES is only conducted in private dwellings therefore it cannot be used to estimate the undercount of homeless people on Census night.

Prevalence measure of homelessness

Measure estimating how many people experience homelessness at one point in time, on Census night (also known as point-in-time estimate). A prevalence estimate should ensure that each person is included only once in the estimate if they were homeless at a particular point in time.

Private dwelling

See Dwelling.

Proficiency in Spoken English

Proficiency in spoken English refers to persons who speak a language other than English at home, who report their self assessed proficiency in spoken English. It should be regarded as an indicator of a person's ability to speak English rather than a definitive measure of his/her ability and should be interpreted with care.

Registered marital status

Registered Marital Status reports responses to the question 'What is the person's present marital status?' and refers to the legal status of the person, and not necessarily his/her current living arrangement. The partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex as same-sex relationships cannot be registered as marriages in Australia. Marital status is applicable to people aged 15 years and over.

Relationship in Household

This variable describes the relationship of each person in a family to the family reference person or, where a person is not part of a family, that person's relationship to the household reference person.

Children who are usually resident in the household are classified as dependent if they form a parent child relationship and are either 0-14 years of age; or they are 15-24 years of age and also a full-time student (in secondary or tertiary education). Children who are aged 15-24 years who are not full-time students and children aged 25 years and over are classified as non-dependent children. Children who are aged 25 years and over with a child or partner of his/her own, or who are full-time students aged 15-24 years of age with a child or partner of his/her own, are classified according to that relationship.

Remoteness area

Within the **Australian Standard Geographical Classification** (ASGC), the Remoteness classification comprises five categories, each of which identifies a (non-contiguous) region in Australia being a grouping of Collection Districts (CDs) sharing a particular degree of remoteness. The degrees of remoteness range from 'highly accessible' (i.e. major cities) to 'very remote'.

Rent (weekly)

The Census records the individual dollar amounts of rent paid by households on a weekly basis for the dwelling in which they were enumerated on Census Night. This includes caravans etc. in caravan parks. The categories range from \$0-\$9,999 in single dollar amounts.

Residence

See Dwelling, Household, Usual residence.

Residential Status in a Non-Private Dwelling

The Census records whether people enumerated in non-private dwellings (such as motels, hospitals, colleges etc.) are staying there as either: members of staff of the accommodation (e.g. owner, proprietor, porter, cook, teacher, warden, family of owner or family of staff); or residents, guests, patients, inmates, etc.

No information on family relationships is available for people in non-private dwellings because they are enumerated using personal forms.

SAAP

See Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

Scope and coverage

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing aims to count every person who spent Census Night, 8 August 2006, in Australia. This includes people in the six states, the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay Territory, and the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The other Australian external territories (Norfolk Island, and minor islands such as Heard and McDonald Islands), are outside the scope of the Australian Census.

People who leave Australia but who are not required to undertake migration formalities, for example those on oil and gas rigs off the Australian coast, and expeditioners to the Australian Antarctic Territory (and other locations) are also included in the Census. They are coded to Off-Shore Collection Districts.

All private dwellings, except diplomatic dwellings, are included in the Census, whether occupied or unoccupied. Caravans in caravan parks and manufactured homes in manufactured home estates, are counted only if occupied. For the 2006 Census, unoccupied residences in retirement villages (self-contained) are included. In previous Censuses they were excluded. Occupied non-private dwellings, such as hospitals, prisons, hotels, etc. are also included.

For more detail see **Census Dictionary, 2006** (cat. no. 2901.0).

Self-enumeration

Self-enumeration is the term used to describe the way Census data are collected. The Census forms are generally completed by householders (or individuals in non-private dwellings) rather than by interviewers, although interviewers are available in some areas if required.

Sex

The sex of each person enumerated in the Census is recorded as being either male or female.

SLA

See Statistical Local Area.

Sleepers-out

See Dwelling Structure.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas - Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)

The Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage is a general socio-economic index that summarises a wide range of information about the economic and social resources of people and households within

an area. Because this index focuses on disadvantage, only measures of relative disadvantage are included. This means that a high score (or decile) reflects a relative lack of disadvantage rather than relative advantage

This index summarises 17 different measures, such as low income, low education, high unemployment and unskilled occupations. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general. For example, an area could have a low score if there are (among other things) many households with low income, many people with no qualifications, or many people in low skilled occupations.

A high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general. For example, an area may have a high score if there are (among other things) few households with low incomes, few people with no qualifications or in low skilled occupations.

Stock measures

See Prevalence measures of homelessness.

South Sea Islander

Australian South Sea Islanders are the descendants of South Sea Islanders brought to Australia as indentured labour around the turn of the twentieth century and have been identified by legislation as a disadvantaged minority group.

This group excludes later voluntary migrants from the South Pacific region.

Specialist Homelessness Services

As of the 1st of July, 2011, The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (see SAAP) National Data Collection was replaced with the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) will compile the data, the first of which will become available in 2012. This Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data collection will provide data about the pathways people take in and out of homelessness and the kinds of work homelessness agencies do. It will be able to identify individual clients as well as support periods and children will be counted as individual clients. In addition, family information will be more accurate. Information about previous episodes of homelessness and people turned away from homelessness agencies will also be available. The data will be able to provide snapshots of homelessness at a given point in time, which was not previously available with the past datasets.

Special Indigenous personal form

See Interviewer household form.

Spouse

See Partner.

State and territory

The State/Territory is the largest spatial unit in the **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)**. There are six states and five territories in the ASGC: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay Territory and the external Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Jervis Bay Territory, and the Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are grouped as one spatial unit at the State/Territory level in the category of Other Territories.

States/Territories consist of one or more Statistical Divisions. In aggregate, they cover Australia without gaps or overlaps.

Statistical Division (SD)

A Statistical Division (SD) is an **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)** defined area which represents a large, general purpose, regional type geographic area. SDs represent relatively homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable social and economic links between the inhabitants and between the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities. They consist of one or more Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They do not cross state or territory boundaries and are the largest statistical building blocks of states and territories.

In New South Wales, proclaimed New South Wales Government Regions coincide with SDs except for North Coast, which consists of the SDs of Richmond-Tweed and Mid-North Coast.

In the remaining states and territories, SDs are designed in line with the ASGC general purpose regional spatial unit definition.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Divisions in each state/territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006** (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Statistical Local Area (SLA)

The Statistical Local Area (SLA) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which consists of one or more Collection Districts (CDs). SLAs are Local Government Areas (LGAs), or parts thereof. Where there is no incorporated body of local government, SLAs are defined to cover the unincorporated areas. SLAs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Local Areas in each state/territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006** (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Student

See Full/Part-Time student status.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of Commonwealth, State and Territory government programs assisting people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness, including women escaping domestic violence. From the 1st of July, SAAP was replaced with the Specialist

Homelessness Services.

The overall aim of SHS is to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, in order to help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence

- to resolve crisis;
- to re-establish family links where appropriate;
- to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP.

The states and territories were responsible for managing the program, while services were provided largely by independent agencies. In 2007-08 approximately 1,550 non government, community or local government organisations were funded nationally under the program. Such organisations ranged from small stand-alone agencies with single outlets to larger auspice bodies with multiple outlets. They provided accommodation and support services to a range of groups including homeless families, singles, young people, and women and children escaping domestic violence.

Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

The Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) aims to measure the prevalence of disability in Australia and levels of support needed, as well as providing a demographic and socio-economic profile of people with disability and older people (65 years and over) compared with the general population. It also provides information about people who provide care to older people and people with disability.

Temporarily absent

The Census form seeks information about people who usually reside in a dwelling but who are temporarily absent on Census Night.

Tent

See Dwelling Structure.

Tenure Type

Tenure type describes whether a household is purchasing, rents or owns, the dwelling in which it was enumerated on Census Night, or whether the household occupies it under another arrangement. Tenure type is derived from the responses to a series of questions. It is applicable to all occupied private dwellings.

Territory

See Australia, State and territory.

Torres Strait Islander people

People identified as being of Torres Strait Islander origin. May also include people identified as being of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal origin.

Type of Educational Institution Attending

The Census 2006 records the type of educational institution being attended by people who are full/part-time students. The categories cover pre-school through to tertiary institutions.

Type of Non-Private Dwelling

The Census records the type of non-private dwelling in which people were enumerated on Census Night. Non-private dwellings are establishments which provide a communal type of accommodation. Examples of categories are Hotel, motel; Boarding house, private hotel; Public hospital (not psychiatric); and Child care institution.

Under-enumeration

Census collectors direct extensive efforts toward locating dwellings and households within districts, however locating them all is sometimes not possible. Some dwellings may not be identified. For example, in commercial areas, flats above or behind shops may be difficult to find. Also, particularly where contact is not made at delivery, flats behind or attached to private dwellings may not be included in the Census. Analysis of the undercount in previous Censuses has shown that people away from their usual residence on Census Night (for example, travelling, camping, staying in a non-private dwelling, or visiting friends) are more likely to be missed than people at home on Census Night.

Even when a household is found, under count is possible if not all members of the household are included on the form (for example, if there are more than six people in the household and no extra forms are obtained) or if the household, or a member of the household, refuses to cooperate and complete a Census form.

A measure of the extent of under enumeration is obtained from the Post Enumeration Survey (PES). The official population estimates produced by the ABS take into account the results of the PES. However, the Census counts are not adjusted. The PES is only conducted in private dwellings therefore it cannot be used to estimate the underenumeration of homeless people

on Census night.

See also Post Enumeration Survey (PES).

Under estimation

The difficulty in isolating unique characteristics of the homeless population within the Census of Population and Housing can result in the misclassification of homeless persons, and subsequent underestimation of the homeless population. The complexity and diversity of persons homeless experiences, and persons not identifying themselves as homeless increases the likelihood of underestimation of homelessness in particular groups, including Youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people escaping domestic and family violence.

Unemployed

See Labour force status.

Unoccupied private dwelling

See Dwelling.

Usual address

Usual address information is used to code usual residence.

See Usual residence.

Usual residence

Usual residence data provide information on the usually resident population of an area, and on the internal migration patterns at the state and regional levels. The 2006 Census had three questions on usual residence that asked where the person usually lived on Census Night, and where the person usually lived one year ago and five years ago.

Family variables are only derived for people counted at their usual residence. Temporarily absent persons are used to classify types of relationships and families existing in a household, but they are not used in the derivation of any other Census characteristics or in other Census output. If all members of a family are absent from their usual residence, no family records are created for them. Family and household structures are based on persons usually resident. If all members of a family or household are temporarily absent, the family or household is not counted.

Visiting friends and relatives

Homeless operational group used by Chamberlain and MacKenzie in the report **Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0).

Visitor only households

For the purposes of homelessness estimation and estimating marginal housing visitor only households are those dwellings where all persons in the dwelling reported no usual address and there were no usual residents.

See also Visitors to a household, Usual residence.

Visitors to a household

Characteristics of individual visitors to a household are available at the household of enumeration. Visitors may also be tabulated according to their CD of usual residence but cannot be placed back to their dwelling of usual residence.

All household and family classifications in the Census are based on the relationships of people usually residing in the household. This applies when there is at least one person aged 15 years and over present. In these classifications, people temporarily absent are included, and visitors are excluded.

The relationship of visitors to one another, or to any resident (including cases where all the people enumerated are visitors) is not further classified.

Households containing only visitors are excluded from household mobility variables.

Visitors to Australia

Question 8 on the Census form, 'Where does the person usually live?' allows the identification of people who are usually resident in another country. These overseas visitors are identified as a separate category for all applicable variables.

Voluntary work for an organisation or group

For Census 2006, the number of people who spent time doing unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group, in the twelve months prior to Census night was measured. It excludes work done

- as part of paid employment
- if main reason is to qualify for Government benefit
- in a family business.

Weekly personal income

Provides an indicator of the gross income (including pensions and allowances) that persons aged 15 years and over usually receives each week.

Year of Arrival in Australia

The 2006 Census records the year of arrival in Australia for people born overseas who intend staying in Australia for at least one year. For the 2006 Census, the category 'Overseas visitor' consists of those people who report they usually reside in another country.

Abbreviations

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Aus	Australia
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
CSA	Census and Statistics Act 19050
ETHOS	European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
FaCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GSS	General Social Survey
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
PES	Post Enumeration Survey
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
PTA	Persons Temporarily Absent
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SLCD	Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset
Tas.	Tasmania
THM	Transitional Housing Management
Vic.	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

Monetary Cut-offs for the Methodology (Appendix)

APPENDIX 1 MONETARY CUT-OFFS FOR THE METHODOLOGY

MONETARY CUT OFFS

This Appendix includes additional details on the monetary cut-offs used in the homeless methodology for 2006 and 2001.

Income

The Census collects personal income for all persons aged 15 years and over. People are asked to report the total of all their wages and salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and any other income they usually receive, before deductions for tax, superannuation contributions, health insurance, amounts salary sacrificed, or any other automatic deductions. People were asked to report their usual income by selecting an income from a range (they were not asked to report in actual dollars). The ranges were selected after analysing data from the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH), in which personal income was collected in actual dollar amounts.

Household incomes were not collected in the Census but were derived from personal income data. As it is not possible to

aggregate personal income ranges, a specific dollar amount was imputed for each personal income range selected by each household member. For the Census processing, the weighted median estimates of gross weekly personal income from the Survey of Income and Housing, adjusted for inflation, were calculated for each of the reported ranges in the Census. These medians were then allocated to each person who reported an income range in the Census.

Individual and combined income cut offs in the homeless methodology were chosen at the levels outlined in the rules for each of the homeless operational groups because, along with other characteristics of the person or household, the ABS felt this was evidence that the households were most likely to have, on balance, accommodation alternatives. The cut-offs for each Census year were set to ensure that those with high levels of income were not misclassified as homeless.

For individual incomes, the range boundary is quoted to indicate that the individuals with income below the range value specified, where on balance, unlikely to have accommodation alternatives. Because income is collected in ranges it is not possible to make a finer distinction within the range.

For the homeless operational group relating to boarding houses, the values for individual income were \$600 per week in 2006 and \$400 per week in 2001.

An alternative range value was taken for the homeless operational group 'Persons in other temporary lodging' the individual income boundary value is \$400 per week in 2006 and \$300 per week in 2001.

For the household income cut-offs, the 2006 Census was used as the base. Average weekly earnings showed a 25.5% change for income between 2001 and 2006 resulting in a household income cut off in the methodology of \$1,594 in 2001 and \$2,000 per week in 2006.

Rental payments

Mean weekly housing costs, as measured in the 2005-06 ABS Survey of Income and Housing for households renting in the private rental market, was \$223 per week.

No State, and no capital city recorded an average weekly rent in the private rental market that was above \$300 per week. Median weekly rentals in the private rental market were lower than the means, in total and for all States and Territories, except the ACT (ABS 2007).

The cut off for rental payments was set above a level that could be afforded by those who were, on balance, most likely to be homeless.

The 2006 Census rental payments were used as the base for rental payments and then rent was adjusted to 2001 by taking into consideration the changes in the cost of living in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI showed a 13.0% change between 2001 and 2006. In the methodology the weekly rental repayment cut-off was set to \$265 per week in 2001 and \$300 per week in 2006.

Mortgage payments

Mortgage payments were set to a level considered to be above a level of mortgage payment that could be afforded by those who were, on balance, most likely to be homeless.

Analysis of the 2006 Census data identified that a number of persons who reported owning their 'improvised dwelling' with a mortgage, had mortgage repayments of \$1,050 or over per month and no one in the dwelling was employed full-time (excluding persons temporarily absent).

Based on an analysis of the characteristics of these people, they were unlikely, on balance, to be homeless and as a result, were not included in the homeless population. It was concluded that the characteristics of this group indicated they were most likely to be persons repaying a mortgage on land they are purchasing, and who could be in an 'improvised dwelling' while building or waiting to build their home.

The 2006 Census was used as the base for mortgage repayments and then repayments were adjusted to 2001 by taking into consideration the changes in the cost of living in the CPI. The 'house purchase' from the CPI showed there was a 24.2% change between 2001 and 2006. In the methodology the mortgage repayment cut-off for 2001 was \$845 or more per month and \$1,050 or more a month in 2006.

Membership of HSRG Finalising the New Methodology Sub-group (Appendix)

APPENDIX 2 MEMBERSHIP OF HSRG FINALISING THE NEW METHODOLOGY SUB-GROUP

MEMBERSHIP OF THE HSRG METHODOLOGY SUB-GROUP

The role of the methodology sub-group of HSRG is to provide recommendations to the HSRG regarding the methodology

used for estimating the prevalence of Homelessness using Census of Population and Housing from 2001, 2006 and 2011.

The HSRG will consider the sub-group's recommendations, and utilise them in formulating its advice to ABS.

Peter Harper	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Chair Delegated to Bob McColl
Dr Shelley Mallet	Hanover Welfare Services	
Prof Chris Chamberlain	Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University	
Assoc Prof David MacKenzie	Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University	
Sarah Kahn	Council to Homeless Persons	
Leon Donovan	Australian Government - Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Delegated to Edmond Hsu
Dr Jill White	Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	
Mark Bagshaw	South Australian Department for Communities and Social Inclusion	
Geoff Neideck	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	
Travis Gilbert	Homelessness Australia	
Helen Hemsley	Anglicare WA	Replaced Dr Jennie Gray April 2012
	Housing NSW, Family and Community Services	
Travis Gilbert	Homelessness Australia	

Terms of Reference Finalising the New methodology Sub-group (Appendix)

APPENDIX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FINALISING THE NEW METHODOLOGY SUB-GROUP

ROLE

This sub-group is an advisory group. The role of the methodology sub-group of HSRG is to provide recommendations to the HSRG regarding the methodology used for estimating the prevalence of Homelessness using Census of Population and Housing from 2001, 2006 and 2011. The sub-group should consider the work of the Definition sub-group in providing it advice and recommendations.

Advice on improving the enumeration, collection or estimation of homelessness in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing is out of scope for this sub-group and separate advice will be sort from members of HSRG.

The HSRG will consider the sub-group's recommendations, and utilise them in formulating its advice to ABS.

The ABS will utilise the advice of the sub-group and the HSRG in the development of a final methodology for use in compiling official Homelessness statistics from these Censuses.

OUTPUT

A paper outlining the key suggestions for change to the methodology, other options considered, and the reasons behind the decisions, to be presented to HSRG.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the HSRG can elect to join or nominate someone to attend on their behalf to provide expert advice, from their particular perspective, concerning the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census.

MODE OF OPERATION

The methodology sub-group will be chaired by Mr Peter Harper or a delegate.

The sub-group will communicate via teleconference and email. The sub-group will commence in April 2012 and operate until May 2012. It will meet as often as required to progress the tasks within the required time frame. The frequency will be determined by the chair and the sub-group members.

The ABS will provide secretariat support for the methodology sub-group (circulating agendas, papers and documenting

meeting outcomes). The ABS will cover reasonable teleconference costs for participants of non-government organisations.

The Chair will determine meeting agendas in consultation with sub-group members. Members are invited to suggest agenda items and contribute papers and other material for discussion.

Sub-group meeting papers and minutes will be considered public documents, unless otherwise stated.

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